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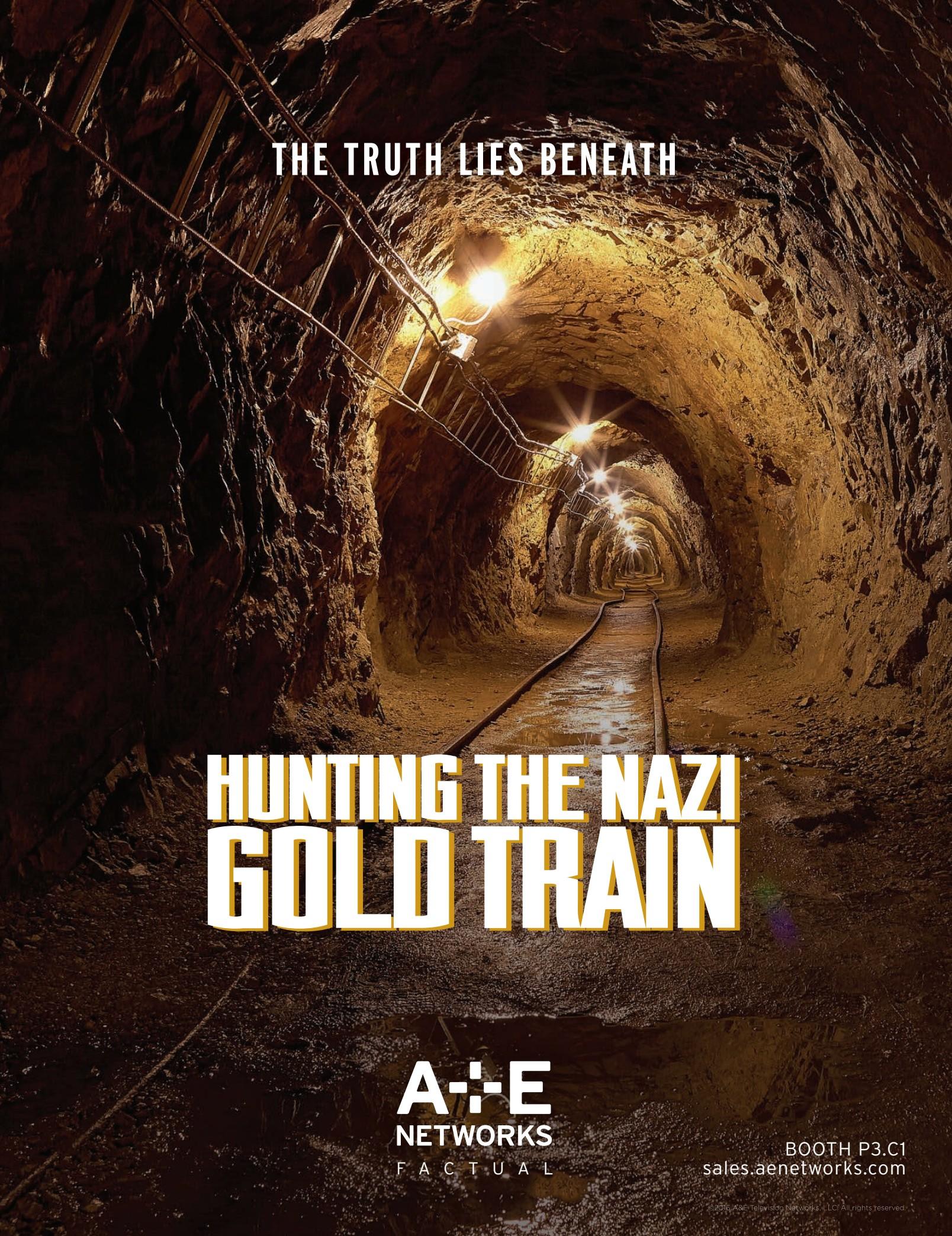
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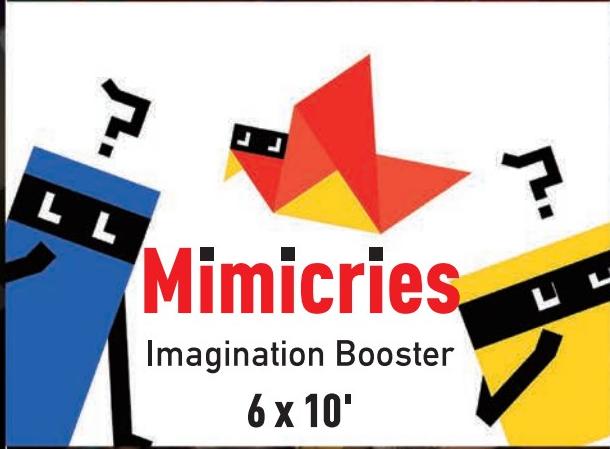
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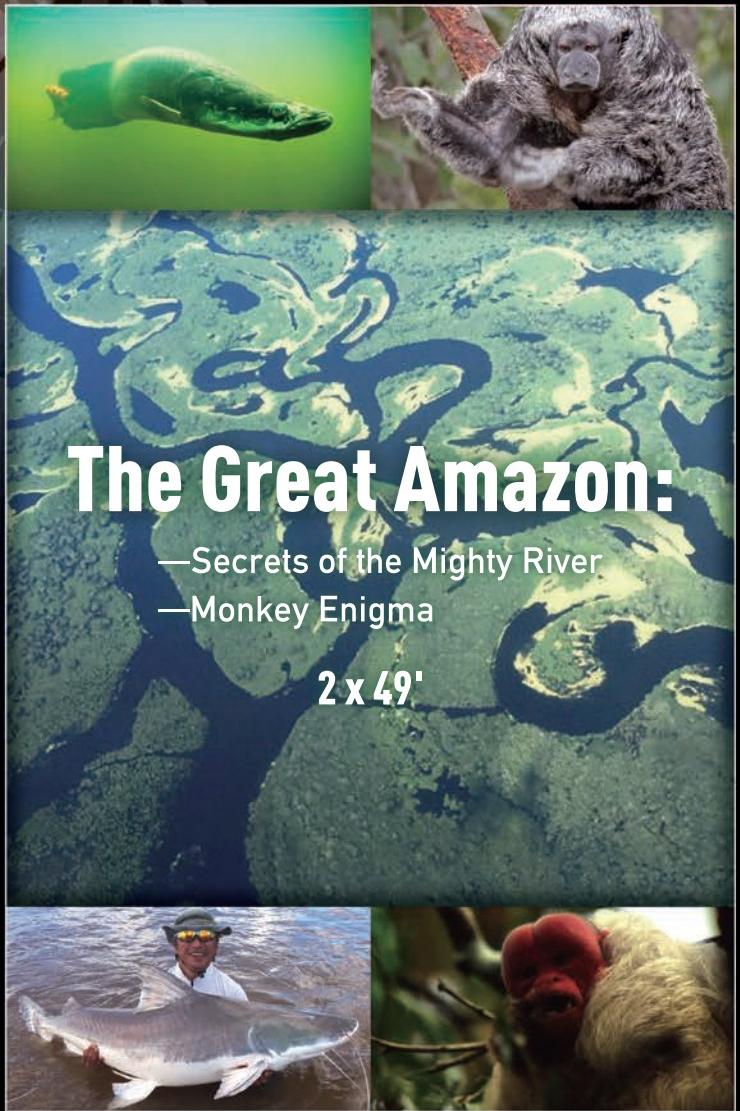
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LIFE ON “MARS”

Behind the scenes of Nat Geo's
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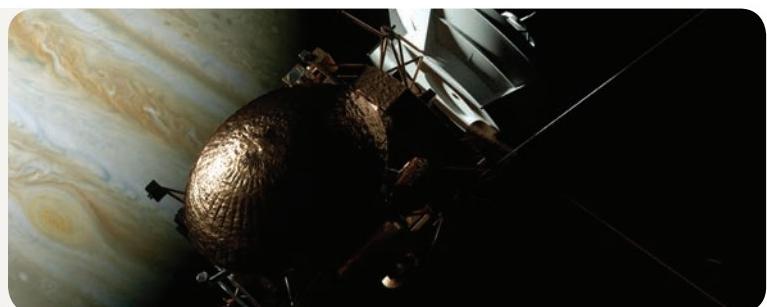


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Ron Howard gets a little help from avid Beatles collectors for his Fab Four doc. (Photo: © Apple Corps Ltd.)



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National Geographic Channel's *Migrations* is part of a new wave of survival and endurance series.

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CHANGE IS A FOOT

Before diving into this issue's editorial, allow me to confirm that its headline does not contain a typo.

It is indeed true that change is afoot in the non-fiction content industry, and has been for some time. But change itself can take on many guises, and sometimes it serves as a metaphorical foot, kicking one firmly in the rear – or perhaps a more delicate part of the anatomy – in order to achieve its aim and move things forward.

Thus, some of the changes besetting the unscripted content world lately – falling ratings for former juggernauts, cord-cutting and inadequate methods to measure total viewership in the mobile era, increased production and development costs whittling away at margins – seem to be inflicting fair amounts of pain. Meanwhile, the “gain” part of the equation, particularly for the production community, seems to be evasive, or even non-existent.

Rampant M&A activity brought in big bucks for some, but now the parent companies, and their shareholders, want results. And while the SVOD behemoths such as Netflix and Amazon are making moves into the unscripted space, having already embraced documentary, the steps are tentative and it remains to be seen what unscripted programming is going to really pop via these platforms.

And in recent weeks, news of the legal wrangling between LMNO Productions – until recently, the prodcо behind TLC's *The Little Couple*, among other series – and Discovery Communications has rocked the unscripted world and cast a glaring spotlight upon the fissures within the producer-network relationship in the U.S.

We're already seeing action from the Non-Fiction Producers Association and PactUS – the trade bodies that were recently established to promote best practices and healthy working relationships between networks and producer partners – to engage buyers in constructive conversation regarding these concerns. And as the industry prepares to gather in Washington DC for the upcoming Realscreen Summit, our event will also act as a forum in which the dominant issues of the day can be discussed, through a meeting of the minds involving all the stakeholders.

The road to resolution can be a bumpy one, but that shouldn't deter anyone from taking it.

Closer to home, change is also afoot here at *realscreen*, particularly within our editorial team. In August, we bid a fond farewell to our news editor, Manori Ravindran, as she set off to the UK for her next chapter. And, as you'll see in our Biz section, I'm once again stepping down from the editor perch to spend more time with my own cadre of ass-kickers – my family. But I will still be working with you for the near future on our market-leading events, including the upcoming Summit, and working with our managing editor, Darah Hansen, as she becomes fully immersed in the wonderful world of *realscreen*, and its readership.

I'll sign off by paraphrasing something that, conveniently, ties in with this column's title: If you ever wonder where you're supposed to be, look down at your feet. As you all continue to put one foot in front of the other, even along a rocky road, may you get to where you need to go.

Cheers,
Barry Walsh
Editor at large and content director
realscreen

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AS GOOD AS A REST

If a change really is as good as a rest, then by all accounts, I should be fully refreshed and invigorated.

Over the course of the past couple of months the *realscreen* editorial team has seen some changes. After seven years at the editorial helm of our publishing platforms and for the last few as content director of our industry-leading events, Barry Walsh has made the noble decision to become a stay-at-home dad, and as such is relinquishing his post as editor. I'm pleased to note that we have arranged that he will stay on in a contract capacity as editor at large and content director, ensuring the content at the upcoming editions of the Realscreen Summit and Realscreen West will be timely and topical.

Barry's contribution to the brand is undisputed, and I'm honored to have worked alongside such a committed partner for all these years. He leaves a great legacy, and I'm excited to introduce Darah Hansen as our newly appointed managing editor, who is charged with continuing it. Most recently editor of our sister publication, *Stream Daily*, Darah brings with her a wealth of editorial experience and a deep understanding of the international entertainment biz. You can find out more about her on page 17.

As Barry mentioned, we've also recently bid adieu to Manori Ravindran, who has moved to the UK to embark upon the next chapter of her life and career.

Keeping within the theme of change, you might have noticed some fairly radical changes to *realscreen.com* and the daily newsletter over the course of the last few weeks. More than an aesthetic refresh, you'll note that content has been organized to better reflect the interests of our audience. Prior to the relaunch, stories were categorized by platform. Because *realscreen* covers content in the unscripted programming and documentary realms, we took the view that navigating the content would be much more efficient if it was sorted by genre and that the interface would be better suited to users' needs.

Technically, we are now firmly out of the pen-and-paper era, having mobile-optimized the website and the newsletter to create an enhanced user experience and optimal results for our advertisers.

I welcome your comments and feedback on the relaunch. We're here to serve.

'Til next time, go well.

Claire Macdonald
VP & Publisher
realscreen

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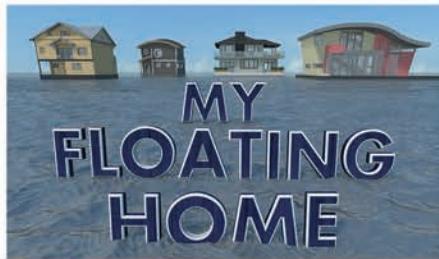
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ERICK: THE BOY WITH NO FACE

1x60' Channel 5

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MATILDA AND ME
1x60' ABC Australia

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GRANNY INK
1x60' Channel 5

With a shocking rise in OAPs going under the needle, we follow five very different senior citizens on five very different tattoo journeys with each inking telling its own unique story.



OPERATION LIGHTHOUSE RESCUE
1x60' PBS

On the stunning island of Martha's Vineyard, just off the East Coast mainland, stands a 160-year-old piece of American history that is still saving lives today - the Gay Head Lighthouse. Can it be saved, before it's too late?



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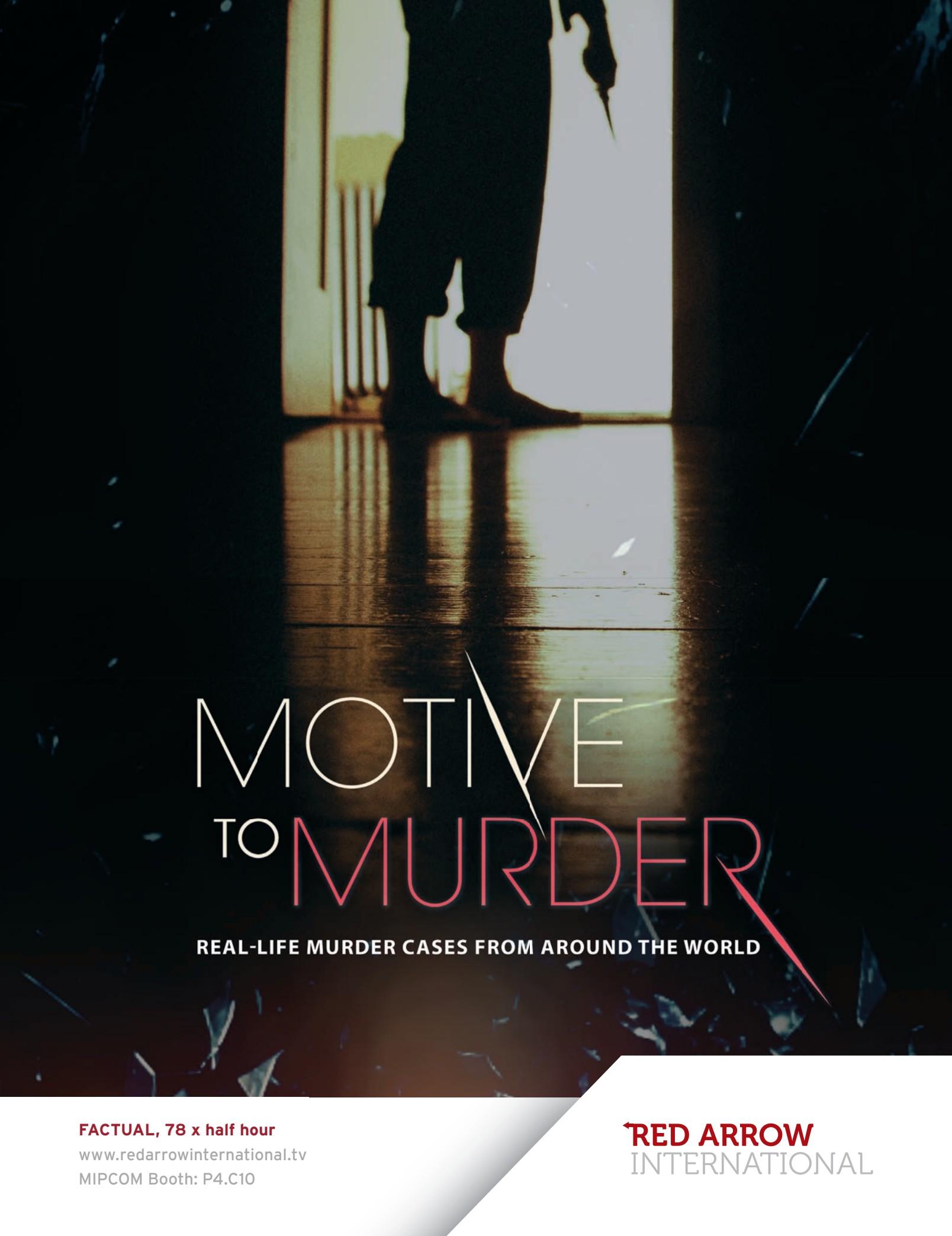


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AFTER THE VOTE

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

Following the results of the UK's historic vote to leave the European Union, *realscreen* spoke with several members of the factual and doc industry to assess what Brexit might mean to them, and the industry at large.

In the months since the British public voted to exit the European Union, the 'conscious uncoupling' of the UK and Europe leaves more questions than answers for the media sector.

The results of the June 23 referendum saw a 51.9% victory for the 'Leave' camp, with 17,410,742 voting in favor of exiting, and 48.1%, or about 16,141,241, voting to remain. The weeks following the vote saw an overhaul of government, with Theresa May succeeding David Cameron as prime minister, as well as a cut in interest rates from 0.5% to 0.25%.

The broadcast industry, too, is beginning to take cautionary measures, with the UK's Creative Industries Council and Creative Industries Federation establishing working groups to assess challenges and opportunities around Brexit.

As the UK begins both the slow march towards triggering Article 50 – the formal withdrawal agreement for leaving the EU – and its trade negotiations with Europe, *realscreen* gathered a group of factual and doc players to discuss the road ahead. The early August roundtable included Kate Beal, CEO of *Mandela, My Dad and Me* indie Woodcut Media; Laura Marshall, MD of River Monsters producer Icon Films; Ben Barrett, co-MD at copro and financing company Drive; and Paul Pauwels, director of the European Documentary Network. Georgia Brown, executive VP of global content, scripted and non-scripted, and global drama for FremantleMedia International, was interviewed separately. The following was edited for length and clarity.

"British programs will always be regarded highly across the world, so on that basis, we will be okay."

How has Brexit affected your work now and what are your immediate concerns for the future?

Kate Beal: From a production point of view, we have an [immediate] impact because we're filming internationally, so obviously that has an effect on our program budget for everything from flights to car hire, to food and location fees. That's had an immediate negative impact on our productions; however, some of the money we receive comes from abroad so that currency fluctuation has worked in our favor in other areas. We're not too sure if it is a good or a bad thing yet, and we're not really going to say either way, but the immediate impact has been an obvious financial one.

Laura Marshall: We've already felt the impact of Brexit on the increasing expenditure in filming overseas and the way we have to manage that. We have a lot of our productions come from the U.S. so we've been able to mitigate some of those expense issues by a better exchange rate for dollars. But it is a real issue for us. Most of our



Beal

[programs] are overseas and prices have gone up. Budgets aren't going to go up, so we have to consider what that means for a big ambitious project where your costs have gone up by 10%. As I said, because we have a lot of our deals in dollars, we are not feeling a general negative impact – it's just one that we have to consider.

In the future, there are concerns. We've always put together coproductions and that's going to be a little trickier. We use a lot of university resources for our shows – whether it's knowledge, or particular research. A lot of that research is funded by money that comes to Europe, and that money could possibly disappear. I think it may well have an impact on the way universities share their new information, and how they can share it and the quality of the research that comes out of it. And for a specialist factual business like us, that's a concern.

Ben Barrett: We were very happy to receive two phone calls the morning after Brexit from two key clients, one in France and one in Germany, saying, "This is extraordinary, but we just want to let you know that we don't want our relationship to change in any way and we still want to keep working with you." That was very nice to have happen. But at the same time I think we are realistic that there will be changes, we just don't really know what they are yet.

One of the areas that is a concern is that we've worked on projects in the past with European media financing, so if you're [working] with UK companies in the future, I know that there was an announcement pretty early on that, for the time being, UK companies can still apply for media financing, but how long that will last for, I don't know. And in truth, it's hard to say how favorably those applications might be looked upon alongside others from EU countries.

Paul Pauwels: Although we are called the European Documentary Network, we have members from 61 countries, so that does make a difference. As far as we – as an association – are concerned, I don't think we will be hit hard by what happened. Of course, it's a different thing [for] our UK members.

A couple of weeks before the vote, I was invited by the Creative Europe media desk in London to talk about the possibilities that exist for UK filmmakers to coproduce with Europe or to find financing in Europe. Everybody was full of enthusiasm and when I made a joke about Brexit, everybody said, "This is not going to happen. This is just political talk." And the day after the vote, I called several people and I could feel there was a panic. For many of them it might become a dangerous situation. Creative Europe has already been mentioned as a source of financing that has been important to the UK. Some of them are in partnerships that are also funded by Creative Europe and they might be kicked out if Brexit goes through.

Georgia Brown: As a global company with a base in the UK, FremantleMedia is naturally disappointed by the outcome of the referendum. At this stage, it is too early to determine how the decision will affect us.



How has FremantleMedia's European parent group RTL Group so far navigated the impact of the vote and its implications for the company?

Brown: We'll work through the implications of Brexit over the coming months and years with RTL Group and also with Bertelsmann, who have publicly emphasized the importance of the UK to their businesses. Both shareholders have been very supportive.

In July, ITV revealed in its mid-year report that they planned to cut £25 million pounds in overhead costs for 2017 to both meet "the opportunities and challenges" of Brexit. What did you make of that news, and is it a sign that some broadcasters and commissioners may become even more risk-averse?

Marshall: I think broadcasters are risk averse and this is another reason that they may be [using] for citing their risk-averse nature, but I don't see any change in commitment to projects. If they want it, they want it.

Beal: I think Brexit is part of the reason they're doing it, but it's not the whole reason. I think a lot of people have learned from [the 2008 recession]. I remember having a commission on the Monday and losing it on the Thursday because of [investment bank] Lehman Brothers and the impact its bankruptcy had at the time. So I'd imagine that people at ITV are perhaps arming themselves for "what if that happens." They're not certain it's going to happen, but they're preparing the ground if it does.

Pauwels: I don't think that Brexit – at least not for the kinds of docs that we are representing – is going to have a big influence. I go to many international markets where people are looking for coproductions or co-financing or [they're]

pitching their projects and I've never seen people asking for a passport or "Where is this project coming from?" It's quality that counts. And even if things turn sour, I look at how the copros and the [co-financing] goes with countries like Norway and Switzerland, who are also not a part of the European Union. That never causes any problems so I'm not too pessimistic about that.

Barrett: We are all about working with production companies to help them close those gaps [in funding], and what's happened here in the UK for some time [is that] producers are being tasked with going out and finding more money to make their productions work if they have that first UK partner and it's an ambitious project, and a UK channel can't or won't fund it. Then, the burden is with the producer or a company like us working with them, to go and piece together that money from, ideally, as few markets as possible so that we keep value on the back end. And it is really tough: pre-selling and raising copro finances has always been difficult... Those are going to be concerns for us because joining dots is already hard enough; we don't need to make it any harder.

The European Commission is keen on pushing through a Digital Single Market (DSM), which would remove territorial restrictions and create one market for the movement of digital properties. How might the DSM affect you, and how could Brexit impact the UK's place at the table for these negotiations?

Marshall: By exiting Europe we're no longer at the negotiating table where they [can argue] the DSM and its impact on production sales, and the fact that if it goes through we would be no longer able to sell territory by territory into Europe. That is a big issue. I know that Pact is lobbying for a voice at that table and I know that it would have an impact on the European nature of our deals. Icon tends to look west for our copros but it would be important to us to be able to sell territory by territory.

Barrett: It's a crucial thing as we look forward and these rights get more and more important, and as the digital world has an ever-increasing impact on traditional rights. For [the UK] to not be at the table when all of this is happening is obviously a



Barrett



Pauwels

concern, but at the moment it's still another uncertainty.

Brown: Original content is a cornerstone of Europe's audiovisual industry and cultural diversity. We need to ensure that the proposed DSM recognizes this significance in full. We have been supportive of the European Commission's plans to enable cross-border portability of audiovisual content

– which is a great thing for consumers. But we would warn against weakening the framework to the extent that it would put the economics of our industry at risk. For us, it is crucial to remain free in how to license our programming to be able to create and produce audiovisual content. We need to maintain our business model to be able to finance all these beautiful and ambitious high-end productions.

In what ways might Brexit positively impact your businesses. Laura, you work a lot with the U.S., for example. Can you expand on any kind of upside Brexit might have?



Marshall

Marshall: The Americans perked up when they saw that their dollar was going to buy a lot more production and started negotiating on that basis. That felt quite tough actually, when we felt we just lost Europe and suddenly having to battle with the good fortune that had landed on the Americans' doorstep, with the fall in the pound. There is, too, the increased appetite in the U.S. for UK content because there's more bang for their buck. I think it's going to be interesting to see that by exiting Europe we feel we need to go and do more trade with the other blocs, such as Brazil, Russia, India or China. It'll be interesting to see whether Australia with their copro treaty and Canada – whether those territories and those treaties are going to become more important to us as copro partners. And these will [affect] the copro treaties that we will do with Europe when the dust actually settles.

Beal: British programs will always be regarded highly across the world, so I think on that basis we will always be okay. It's just [about] the level of creativity we're going to have to reach now to ensure our place is still on that leaderboard of the world's TV. I think we thrive on creativity and we thrive on those opportunities so I do have a positive outlook; I just think we're going to have to think of different ways of doing things.



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POINTED ARROW: A Producer's Perspective

BY JOHN SMITHSON

It's a strange time. Everything has changed, but nothing has changed. As we gear up for what is always the busiest phase of the creative year, we face a world that is dramatically different than it was, and could be even more so in November.

I'll leave others to dissect the impact of Brexit and the potential consequences of the American presidential election, but at Arrow, it's business as usual. Nothing has changed in our primary markets, the U.S. and UK. The weakness of sterling provides an opportunity, as the dollar or euro stretches further for our international customers. But there's been no big meltdown, no canceled production, no curtailment of ambition – and absolutely no sense of looming disaster. So we just keep traveling in the same direction, heads down and getting on with it.

Sadly, too much of my viewing has been following the gripping UK referendum campaign and the early stages of the U.S. presidential election. Both campaigns have made the most cheesy, over-produced structured reality shows look like models of editorial probity. The political shenanigans following the Brexit vote would have been dismissed in the *House of Cards* writers' room as beyond credibility.

Politics is something I'd normally avoid like the plague in a forum such as this. As indie producers we work in an intensely political environment, but we exist alongside rather than as a part of the mainstream political world. It's very much a case of "us and them."

But the current climate illuminates one inescapable fact, the role of us in creating *them*.

A core skill of any decent producer is to find characters and stories that people want to watch, whatever the platform or show. What could be better for an ambitious politician than a mainstream television profile and an adoring public? It is surely no confidence that two of the star turns in the political world on both sides of the Atlantic thrive on the oxygen generated by their TV fame.

Boris Johnson, former Mayor of London, leader of the Brexiteers and now foreign secretary, has adroitly handled his public profile by clever use of TV. From his many appearances on the long-running satirical news quiz *Have I Got News for You*, to guest appearances on shows such as *Top Gear*; his bumbling TV persona has given him huge public recognition and popularity.

But when it comes to the power of TV, U.S. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump is in a different class. Fourteen seasons as host of NBC's *The Apprentice* has made him one of the giants of reality TV. Add to that a stack of other media work and there can be no doubt that TV has transformed the profile of this real estate mogul way beyond that of any other businessman.

No wonder it was big news when NBC ended the Trump relationship in the wake of his early remarks regarding Mexican immigrants. And he has not exactly been absent from TV screens ever since. If Trump is not occupying the Oval Office next year, we can be sure he will be back on TV, big time.

A paradox of these two high profile politicians is that their fame seems to have provided a Teflon coating. Scandals have been linked to both Johnson and Trump yet nothing seems to stick. I find this a humbling reminder of the power TV producers can exert by the creation of celebrity.

The constant quest for new faces continues unabated. Whatever the platform, everyone is searching for the next hot talent. But remember, next time you're looking at a casting tape, think carefully about what you might be creating.

While there are many horror stories, thankfully, it's not always a nightmare. Last year's most watched show in the UK was the BBC's *Great British Bake Off* [now headed to Channel 4 – ed.]. The winner was Nadiya Hussein, a compelling woman of Bangladeshi descent, who has done wonders for outside perceptions of the Muslim community.

John Smithson is the creative director of Arrow Media, an indie he co-founded in 2011. Previously he was chief executive at Darlow Smithson Productions.



REALSCREEN WELCOMES NEW MANAGING EDITOR

Darah Hansen (pictured), most recently editor of Brunico Communications' *Stream Daily*, has joined *realscreen* as managing editor, as Barry Walsh is stepping down as editor after seven years.

Walsh, who is leaving the position in order to spend more time with his young family, will remain with *realscreen* in a freelance capacity as content director and editor at large. In this role, he will continue to curate *realscreen's* market-leading events, the *Realscreen Summit* and *Realscreen West*, while also handling aspects of editing the brand's print publications for the immediate future.

Hansen most recently served as editor of *realscreen* sister brand *Stream Daily*, an international trade publication that served the digital video and technology space. She is an award-winning journalist who has spent over two decades covering a wide range of issues from real estate and urban development to immigration, politics and human rights. She had an overseas stint as a war reporter in Afghanistan for Canada's Global TV and print network and was a national business blogger with Yahoo Canada.

"Barry has been instrumental in building the *realscreen* brand for the past seven years, and it's been my pleasure to share in our success with him," said *realscreen* vice president and publisher Claire Macdonald in a statement. "I'm delighted that he's able to remain on as content director and curate sessions that tackle real industry issues at our flagship events.

"Darah brings with her a wealth of editorial experience and an understanding of the international entertainment industry, and I look forward to introducing her to our community and working with her to continue to meet the expectations of our audience," Macdonald added.



BEST PRACTICES: HOW TO HANDLE CRITICISM

BY CHRIS PALMER AND SHANNON LAWRENCE

No matter what industry you are in, or whether you are working with close colleagues or authoritative associates, you will face criticism at some point. Criticism is a reminder that we are constantly learning from our colleagues. How you choose to receive and utilize criticism can make the difference between professional growth and professional setback. Here are six tips on how to handle criticism in the workplace.

Don't take it personally Professional criticism is not directed at who you are as a person. A boss or colleague typically is not attacking you when telling you that your report or proposal is not up to snuff. The goal of criticism in a professional environment is to improve the quality of work being produced or to improve the strength of a team. Once you focus on the content of the criticism and put your feelings aside, you will be in a better position to receive the criticism and use it constructively.

Take a breather It's natural to want to be emotional after receiving criticism. You work hard on a project only to be told that you have to go back and rethink it. That hurts. But defensiveness, dismissiveness, and displays of petulance in response to criticism at work are inappropriate and harm your professional reputation. After receiving criticism, take some time to breathe and recoup so that you can respond in a rational, collegial, and positive manner.

Reflect and assess An important step in using criticism constructively is assessing its importance to you. Have you received this criticism before? Is the criticism from someone you respect? Use your head when deciding how to respond to criticism for the benefit of the work product and your professional development. Be honest about the validity of the criticism and plan how to improve your performance.

Take criticisms as suggestions, not rules

Chances are you are going to receive a lot of criticism over the course of your career. Should you take every piece of criticism as law? No. Make sure that the criticisms are valid, constructive, and useful for improving your work. If you do not believe criticism is justified, discuss the issue with your colleague to determine what can be done to satisfy his or her concerns.

Ask for clarification Make sure you are clear on the details of any criticisms of your professional work. You may have to ask for guidance in correcting a behavior or honing a skill. This is nothing to be ashamed of. It's okay to ask for help to improve your performance if you need it. Most colleagues will respect your openness and desire to do a good job.

Be positive Criticism is a learning opportunity. Keeping this in mind and taking a positive and persevering attitude toward criticism can help you improve your professional reputation, enhance the quality of your work, and be a valuable player in the workplace.

Criticism is inevitable in professional environments. It should be viewed as a tool employed for progress rather than a weapon for diminishment. Take the above six tips into account the next time you receive criticism in the workplace. They will help you move forward and become a stronger working professional.

Professor Chris Palmer is director of American University's Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of three books, including the newly published *Confessions of a Wildlife Filmmaker* and *Now What, Grad? Your Path to Success After College*. Shannon Lawrence is a filmmaker and MFA candidate at American University. •

IDEAS & EXECUTION

A black and white photograph of The Beatles standing outdoors in front of the U.S. Capitol building. They are all wearing dark, double-breasted coats over light-colored shirts and ties. The man on the far left has dark hair and a slight smile. The man next to him is smiling broadly. The man in the center has curly hair and is looking slightly to his right. The man on the far right has dark hair and is smiling. The background shows the dome of the U.S. Capitol and some trees.

Yeah yeah yeah

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

The Fab Four in
Washington DC.

Drawing from amateur footage, exhaustive clip searches and underground collectors' networks, the team behind *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years* aimed to not only satisfy hardcore fans, but also bring the Fab Four to the millennial set.

While Ron Howard was making a documentary about the five-year period the Beatles spent touring the world, the director drew an unlikely parallel to another one of his films. *Apollo 13*, the 1995 feature about NASA's disastrous moon mission, is a story of survival. So was Beatlemania. In the documentary *The Beatles: Eight Days A Week – The Touring Years*, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr hit the road in 1963 fresh faced and ready to experience the world.

By their final show in San Francisco's Candlestick Park in 1966, they were intensely famous, disenchanted with the media and unable to hear their own music over screaming fans. Despite making the majority of their money from playing live, they retired from touring to focus on making music in the studio.

"In *Apollo 13*, you have three guys in a capsule trying to figure out how to survive a crisis and not die," explains producer Nigel Sinclair, who also produced Martin Scorsese's George Harrison doc *Living In The Material World*. "That's an extreme thing, but it's three people thrown into a situation and making decisions together. Although you can't parallel the Beatles journey, you could list half a dozen examples of young people that faced the onslaught of public life and fame but disappeared into drugs or chaos."

Produced by The Beatles' Apple Corps with Sinclair's White Horse Pictures, Howard and Brian Grazer's Imagine Entertainment and coproduced by One Voice One World (OVOW), *Eight Days A Week* is the first official Beatles film since the 2003 TV doc series *The Beatles Anthology* and the first official feature since 1970's *Let It Be*.

The challenge for any filmmaker interested in working with the Beatles and Apple Corps is one producers had to overcome in

presentations to surviving band members McCartney and Starr, as well as Lennon and Harrison's widows, Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison. That is, what else is there to say about the group that hasn't already been said over the past 50 years?

Howard and Sinclair wanted to satisfy discerning, long-time fans of the band, but they also wanted *Eight Days A Week* to appeal to younger audiences.

"What millennials are interested in, I am told, is the why of things – not the what," explains Sinclair. "Why did the Beatles become so perfect?"

How did it go so powerfully for so long? What was the magic that made it work?"

The idea for the film began in 2003, when producer and archivist Matthew White pitched a project about the Beatles' touring years to Apple Corps. Then a producer for National Geographic, White thought of the idea after coming across archival footage shot by Nat Geo wildlife filmmakers in Alaska when the group's plane was diverted to Anchorage en route to Japan in 1966.

"It made me realize that wherever the Beatles went there were cameras," says White, who founded OVOW with producer Stuart Samuels and Bruce Higham, cofounder of '60s London club Sibylla's.

Realizing the rise of Beatlemania coincided with the widespread availability of 8mm home movie cameras, he initially pitched the project to Apple Corps as a doc that would tell the story of the group's live tours through amateur footage.

White was also interested in doing a project that would be led by archive. Rather than come up with a treatment first, the

idea was to amass archival material and let it shape the story. Moreover, he hoped an archival-led Beatles doc would demonstrate the value of preserving deteriorating footage as part of programming budgets.

"Most filmmakers go into archives trying to look for material that supports the story, which is not the best use of archives," he says. "There are things in there that [you] might miss or might not be what you're looking for."

After leaving National Geographic, White began researching a proof-of-concept to see if he could find footage that Apple Corps had

not been able to uncover for the *Anthology*. He approached specialty 8mm transfer houses and asked if anyone had brought in Beatles films.

Massachusetts-based Brodsky & Treadway connected him to a collector named Erik Taros, whose mother refused to let him go to

the Beatles' 1966 show at Suffolk Downs near Boston. He's spent much of his life collecting home movies, photos and fan memories to recreate that concert. Taros would prove a pivotal contact.

"He's part of an underground collectors' network that exists in all of the places the Beatles played around the world," explains White. "They work with each other but aren't public about what they do."

Members of the secretive network were scared to give their material to the *Anthology* for fear it would be taken away. Moreover, they often buy Beatles footage and audio at auction houses such as Sotheby's and exposure via films can lessen the material's resale value.

Meanwhile, Jeff Jones became the CEO of Apple Corps and was interested in finding

"By the end of it, everybody was just high from all the different things that we were finding."



**"With the Beatles,
this sense of
chemistry really
comes across in
photographs.
They were so good
at presenting
themselves as a
foursome."**

ways to exploit unseen archives the band controlled. He had been keeping track of OVOW's project and in 2012 financed an six-month archival search based in the University of Maryland with 30 researchers around the world.

The search yielded the only known footage of the Beatles performing in Madrid, British Pathé's 35 mm color film of the 1963 London Palladium show, clips of the band performing on a Scottish kids' show in 1964 and good quality soundboard recordings from a number of concerts. White and Taros then flew to London to review what they'd found with Apple Corps.

"By the end of it everybody was just high from all the different things that we were finding," he says.

Apple Corps greenlit the film and brought White Horse and Ron Howard on board

on the Beatles' Facebook page, which has more than 40 million likes.

Fans discovered the White Horse office number and jammed the switchboard for three days. In all, producers amassed 2,000 separate pieces of audio and photographic images that needed to be cleared and cleaned up for the screen.

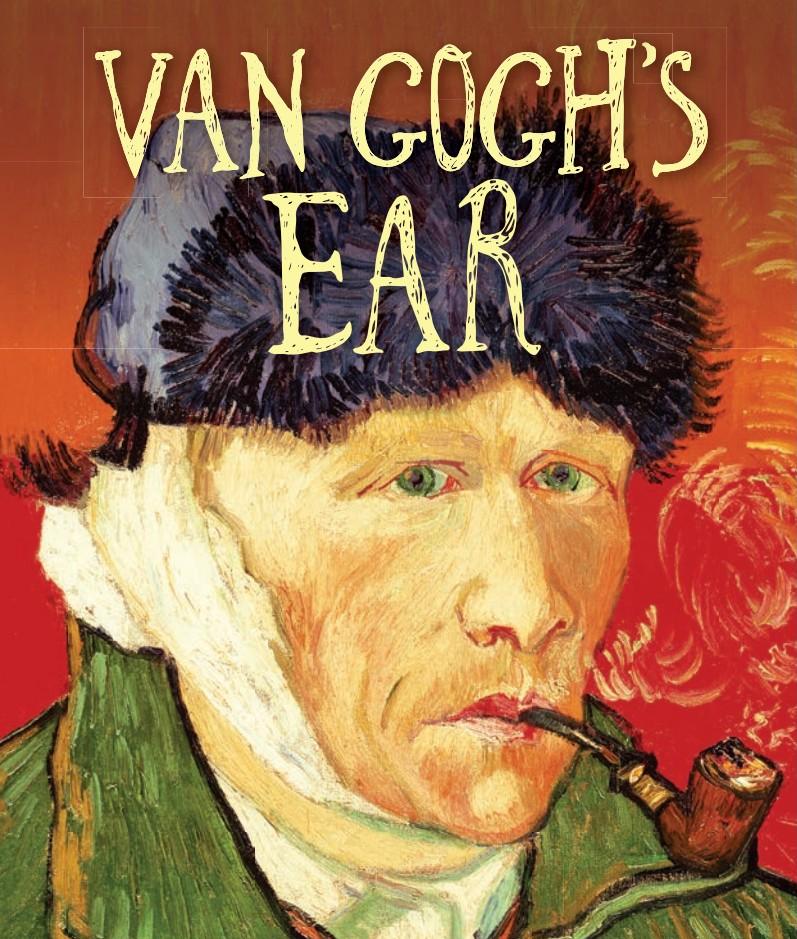
The final film mixes amateur footage with archives from the Beatles' collection and archival sources. It began rolling out theatrically on September 16, with Abramorama handling U.S. distribution, and became available on SVOD platform Hulu a day later. It is the first film acquired by Hulu Documentary Films, which launched in May

to make it. A year later, in May 2014, they went public and asked fans to submit amateur footage via a website advertised

With 100 minutes to tell the story, Howard focused on big themes such as the group's tight-knit relationship, how it unfolded and how the band stopped touring to protect that relationship and their ability to make music together.

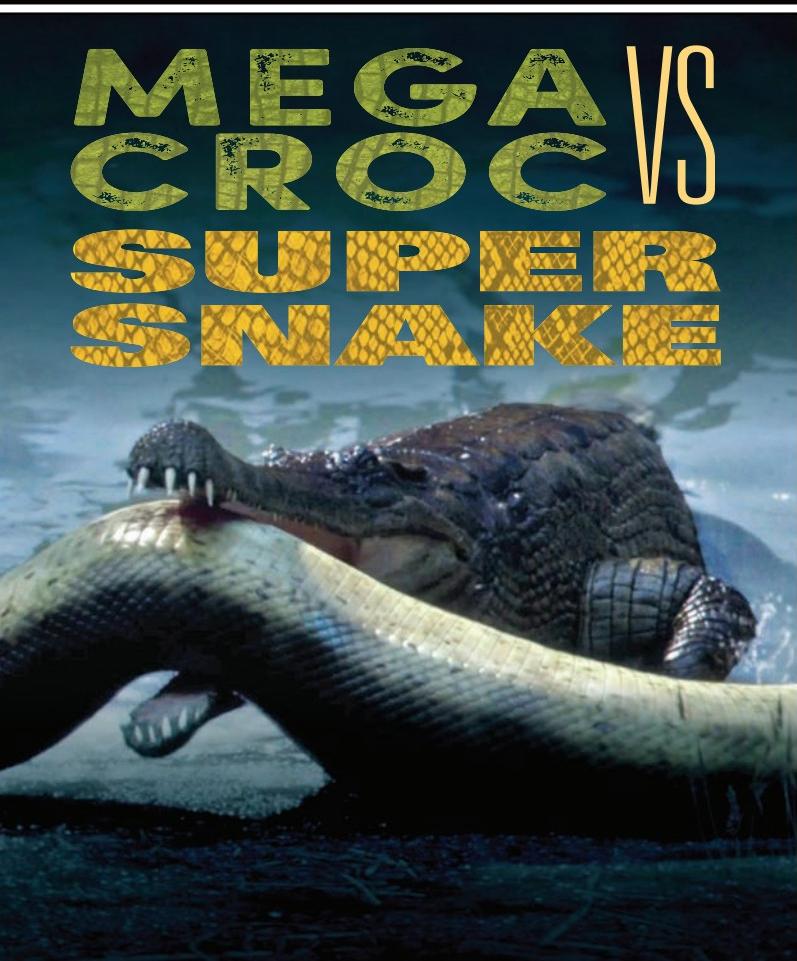
The closeness of that relationship was evident in both the footage and in decisions they made. In 1964, the band went up against segregation in the American South by refusing to perform at the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Florida unless black fans could freely mix with white fans – a moment recounted in the doc by Kitty Oliver, one of a few black teens who attended the gig.

"They were like an arts collective," says Sinclair. "English men don't really like to touch each other. We're shy in public. With the Beatles, this sense of this chemistry between them really comes across in photographs. They're so good at presenting themselves as a foursome." •



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BEST IN SHOW

MIPCOM PICKS 2016

This year's crop of MIPCOM Picks, selected by *realscreen*'s editorial team as our pick of "must see" projects heading to the market, dives deeply into some of the big issues of the day – from the refugee crisis to race relations in the U.S. But there's also lighter factual entertainment in the mix, some scintillating science, and, as always, the true stories that seem stranger than fiction (see our Best in Show, which receives a complimentary pass to the 2017 *Realscreen* Summit).

Saddam Goes to Hollywood

Partners: Mentorn Media for Channel 4; distributed by Passion Distribution

Length: 1 x 60 minutes

Aired: July 2016 (Channel 4)

Rights available: Worldwide, excluding the UK

While it may seem like an idea from a Mel Brooks script, the story of Saddam Hussein's attempt to create a major historical film epic with notoriously mischievous British actor Oliver Reed in the cast is not a work of fiction. In 1981, Hussein brought Reed and several other British actors and crew to the Arabian desert to film *Clash of Loyalties*, a tale of the Iraqi revolt against British colonialists and the birth of modern Iraq. But Reed's penchant for chaos wasn't the only issue dogging the production – there was also the matter of the Iran-Iraq war, which had just begun. Somehow, the film did get made and even screened internationally, but was consigned to a garage in Surrey shortly after its debut. This doc brings together some of the cast behind the project and offers a remarkable glimpse into one of film's stranger footnotes.



Continent 7: Antarctica

Partners: A National Geographic Studios Production for National Geographic Channel; distributed by Fox Networks Group Content Distribution

Length: 6 x 60 minutes

Airing: November 2016

Rights available: All rights worldwide excluding DVD, EST and TVOD

Even for the hardest explorers, Antarctica is no picnic. Here, temperatures dip to more than 100 degrees below zero, winds howl at gusts of 200 miles per hour, snowstorms can cover entire buildings and the dryness of the air can rival that of the Sahara in some areas. But, for a period of time, it's home for a group of scientists studying the harsh terrain. Produced by National Geographic Studios, *Continent 7* is the first long-form doc series to be filmed in the region, and provides a gripping look at life on the world's frozen edge.



60 Days In

Partners: Lucky 8 Productions for A&E; distributed by A+E Networks

Length: 12 x 60 minutes, 3 x 60-minute specials, 1 x 90-minute reunion special (season 1) now available

Aired: March 2016 (A&E, U.S.)

Rights available: Worldwide, finished programming and format rights available

When one is asked how they'd like to spend a couple of months away from the confines of work or home life, jail time is not often on the top of the list. But in this controversial A&E series, seven volunteers entered an Indiana jail "undercover," without the real inmates or even correctional officers being aware of their stories, in an effort to expose any illegal activity amongst the incarcerated, or corruption amongst the staff. While each participant has his or her own reasons for "going in," it's safe to say it's a life-changing experience for them when they come out. The series is onto season two in the U.S., and a local version of the format is being prepped for the UK.

023

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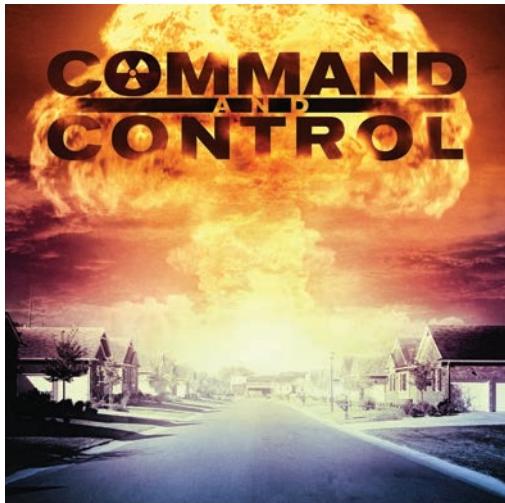
Partners: Geoff Haines-Stiles Productions for American Public Television; distributed by APT Worldwide

Length/volume: 4 x 60 minutes

Airing: March 2017

Rights available: All rights available worldwide, excluding U.S. broadcast

Our Wi-Fi'd world may, on one hand, be responsible for myriad distractions that pull us away from the real, natural world around us. But the advent of mobile, user-friendly technology has also provided tools to democratize that which was once off-limits to the average individual. Along with the rise of citizen journalism, where, in the heat of the moment, an iPhone can capture what a news crew isn't on hand for, there's the citizen science movement, in which those who are interested in a subject – be it fracking, asteroids, or Alzheimer's – can actually be part of the discoveries shaping science today. This four-part series, hosted by NASA chief scientist Waleed Abdalati, shows how citizen scientists are using data, technology and good old-fashioned curiosity to contribute to what we know of the world around us.



Command and Control

Partners: An 'American Experience' production with Robert Kenner Films; distributed by PBS International

Length: 1 x 92 minutes

Premiered: April 2016 (Tribeca Film Festival)

Rights Available: Worldwide

From Robert Kenner, director of *Food Inc.*, comes an incisive look at an incident of "human error" that could have had grave ramifications for humanity itself. Based on Eric Schlosser's best-selling book, the film takes us back to September 1980, when a worker at a Titan II missile complex in Arkansas accidentally dropped a socket in a silo. That socket then punctured the fuel tank of an intercontinental ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead capable of producing a blast 600 times that of Hiroshima. Eyewitness accounts and footage shot within a decommissioned Titan II missile silo bring the story to life.



Killer Hornets

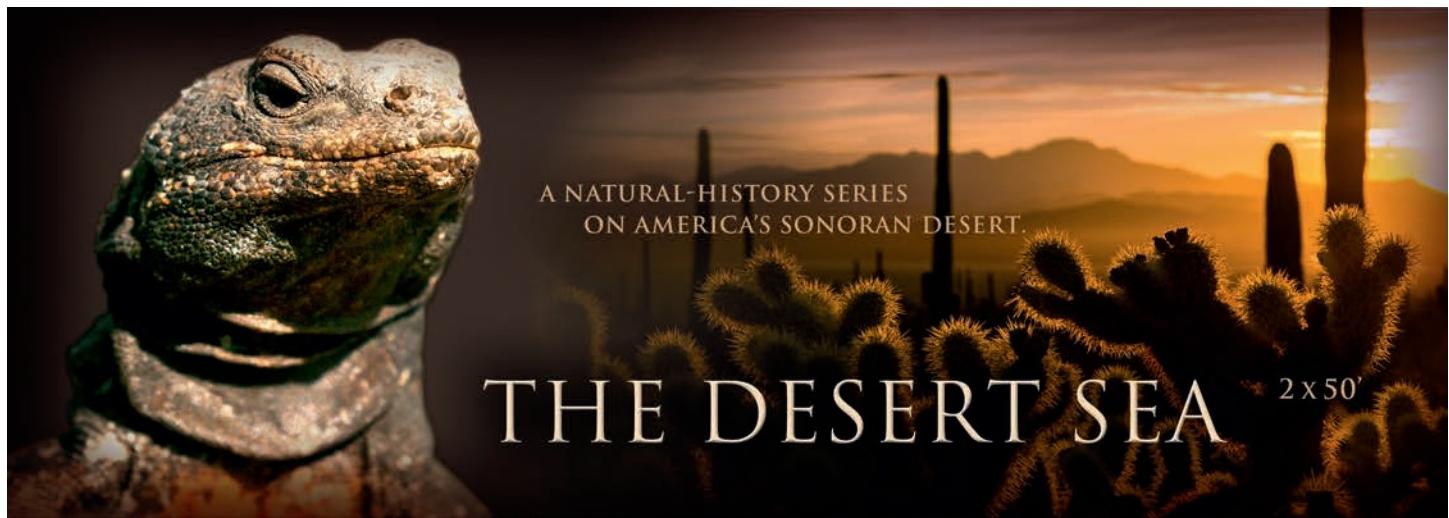
Partners: Earth Touch; Smithsonian Networks; National Geographic Channels; distributed by Earth Touch

Length: 1 x 50 minutes

Aired: September 2016 (Smithsonian Network)

Rights available: Free TV only, worldwide (subject to Earth Touch approval) excluding Canada, U.S. and its possessions, Caribbean Basin, North Africa and Middle East. Available after Jan. 1, 2018

While anyone who has inadvertently bumped a hornet's nest and incurred the wrath of these "winged warriors" might bristle at the idea of watching a doc about them, this look at killer hornets taking on other nasty pests in the forests of Japan is a fascinating study of insect life. High-tech camera work takes us closer to these hordes of hornets, yellow jackets and honey bees than we would ever want to be, depicting their battles for territorial supremacy with practically a bug's eye view.



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RADARSCREEN

THE NEW DIGITAL GLOBAL PITCH GUIDE

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Find out how to pitch and who to pitch to!

Radarscreen spotlights

commissioners from over 90 channels around the globe. It's designed to illuminate the needs of commissioning editors and programming execs from around the world, and provide you with the best intel possible regarding how to pitch your show and who the best potential buyer for your big idea might be.

Within Radarscreen's commissioner profiles you'll find such key information as:

- Submission policies
- Development and programming needs
- Target demo/audience
- Top-rated unscripted/non-fiction programming per channel
- Contact information
- Budget information
- Sizzle tape and content tips

In addition, *Radarscreen* recently launched a new funding organizations feature. These profiles feature international funds that are open to documentary filmmakers and content producers across the globe, as well as regional and national funding programs, all in one convenient place. Profiles break down each funding body's different programs, providing an accessible way to find out what projects they support and how to apply.



American High School

Partners: Swan Films for BBC3; distributed by All3Media International

Length/volume: 6 x 60 minutes

Aired: October 2016

Rights available: Worldwide excluding the UK

Filmed over the course of a year in a high school in Southern California, this six-part documentary series from Swan Films captures the triumphs and challenges facing various African-American students completing their graduating year. Not only do viewers see how the students and staff at the school contend with everyday life and the roller-coaster ride that is the journey from adolescent to adult, but they also gain a glimpse of young America at a time of political and sociological tumult and transition.



Years of Living Dangerously

Partners: A Years Project production for National Geographic Channel; distributed by Fox Networks Group Content Distribution

Length: 8 x 60 minutes

Airing: November 2016

Rights available: All rights worldwide in perpetuity excluding footage

Following its acclaimed debut on Showtime, which resulted in an Emmy win for outstanding non-fiction series, this docuseries investigating the issues surrounding climate change returns via National Geographic Channel. As with the first season, celebrity correspondents take viewers to locales that have been seriously impacted by the situation, while examining key concerns such as extreme weather and wildlife conservation in the face of an environmental crisis. Celebs adding their starpower and viewpoints to the proceedings include David Letterman, Jack Black, Ty Burrell, Olivia Munn and exec producer Arnold Schwarzenegger. (Photo: National Geographic Channels/Michele Short)



Copwatchers

Partners: Renowned Films for BBC3; distributed by DCD Rights

Length: 1 x 60 minutes

Aired: July 2016 (BBC3)

Rights available: Worldwide

Airing via the BBC's online channel this summer as *NYPD: The Biggest Gang in New York?*, this program follows the Cop Watchers, who use their smartphones and cameras to document potential examples of police brutality in the Big Apple. Following incidents in Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the issue has galvanized protest, debate and in some cases, more violence. In this doc, we get the perspectives of both those who are watching the police, and the cops contending with the scrutiny.



Tickling Giants

Partners: Sarkasmos Productions; Technicolor; distributed by ro*co films international

Length: 1 x 111 minutes

Premiered: April 2016 (Tribeca Film Festival)

Rights available: All rights worldwide

Heart surgeon Bassem Youssef watched as the events of the Egyptian Arab Spring unfolded and then embarked upon his own personal revolution by leaving his job and becoming a full-time comedian. As the host of the satirical program *Al Bernameg*, he becomes known as "the Egyptian Jon Stewart" and, with the show's staff, takes on forces of repression with humor, propelling the show to become the Middle East's most-viewed television program, with 30 million viewers per episode. But not everyone who is watching is laughing, and Youssef and his team face intimidation from several corners. Directed by Sara Taksler, senior producer of *The Daily Show* in the U.S., this doc powerfully illuminates the idea that freedom of speech is no laughing matter.



Emergency Call

Partners: De Chinezen for VRT; distributed by Lineup Industries

Length/volume: 7 x 40 minutes

Premiered: March 2016 (VRT)

Rights available: All rights worldwide except for Belgium and the Netherlands

While having to make an emergency call is undoubtedly a stressful situation, the person on the other end of the call needs to keep a cool head in the face of what could be either a crisis, or a colorful crank call. This format follows the action at emergency call centers, as paramedics, police and fire departments field frantic, or sometimes far-fetched, calls from those in need. The series performed well above the time slot average in Belgium, and has been commissioned for the Netherlands.



Messages Home: Lost Films of the British Army

Partners: Oxford Scientific Films for Channel 4; distributed by DRG

Length: 1 x 60 minutes

Aired: June 2016 (Channel 4)

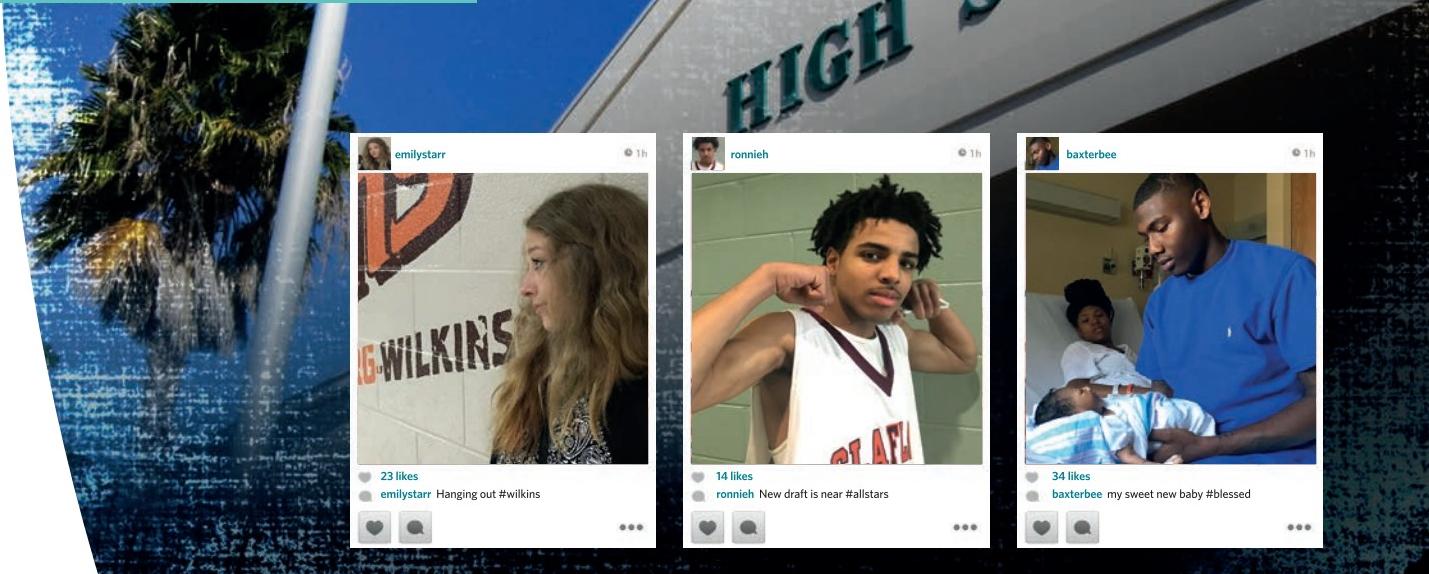
Rights available: All rights worldwide

As the Second World War raged, Britain's 14th Army was engaged in its Burma Campaign, a little-known operation that would lead to the troop's designation through history as "the Forgotten Army." But the hardships endured by the soldiers of the 14th would never be forgotten by those who survived the campaign, and their families. Besides battle, disease was a formidable foe, with 40% of the 14th suffering from malaria. Sensing low morale amongst the soldiers, the Ministry of Defence sent camera crews to Asia to capture messages for the loved ones of some 8,000 servicemen and women, which would then play in cinemas back home. This program brings some of those films to light, and follows the story to the present day, with surviving soldiers of the 14th interviewed.

AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL

A landmark documentary series

in a Presidential year...



From the Grierson Award winning team at Swan Films, a revealing view of African – American life in the USA, as Obama ends his second Presidential term.



Chasing Asylum

Partners: Directed by Eva Orner; produced by Nerdy Girl; distributed by Dogwoof

Length: 1 x 96 minutes

Premiered: April 2016 (Hot Docs)

Rights available: All rights worldwide excluding Australia, New Zealand

Billed as “the film the Australian government doesn’t want you to see,” this hard-hitting documentary examines Australia’s treatment of refugees and asylum seekers over the past 15 years. Featuring interviews with those seeking refuge and whistleblowers from within the system itself, the film also unearths never-before-seen footage detailing the deplorable conditions that some who attempt to enter “The Lucky Country” must contend with. Directed by Eva Orner, who took home an Academy Award for producing Alex Gibney’s *Taxi to the Dark Side*, the film has garnered rave reviews during its run on the festival circuit, with *The Guardian* hailing it as “vital and gut-wrenching.”



Beyond Earth

Partners: DLI Productions for Super Channel and Canal D (Canada); distributed by Off the Fence

Length/volume: 1 x 60 minutes, 1 x 90 minutes

Premiered: July 2016 (Super Channel)

Rights available: Worldwide excluding Canada

From the moon landing to the space shuttle program and the launching of the International Space Station, humanity’s fascination with the “final frontier” remains fervent. Now, as individuals such as Elon Musk and Richard Branson pump significant financial resources into various space exploration initiatives, we find ourselves moving from the era of the entrepreneur to the dawn of the “astropreneur.” This program highlights those who aim to both improve life on earth by marrying tech and environmental activism, as well as the ambitions of those who see humanity moving beyond our blue orb, and even beyond our solar system.



Forever Pure

Partners: Directed by Maya Zinshtain; produced by Duckin’ & Divin’ Films and Passion Pictures for DR, YES, the BBC; distributed by Dogwoof

Length: 1 x 85 minutes

Premiered: July 2016 (Jerusalem Film Festival)

Rights available: All rights worldwide

Beitar Jerusalem has one of the largest and most ardent fan bases of any soccer team in Israel. Many of its supporters are proudly right-wing, and refer to themselves as “La Familia.” During the 2012-2013 season, the club shocked that core of supporters by bringing in two Muslim players from Chechnya. Although the new players have the support of their teammates and coaches, the fans who comprise La Familia will not be swayed, even staging a mass walkout after one of the Muslim players scores a big goal in an important match. The hostility takes a toll on the two players, and, ultimately, the entire team. Journalist and filmmaker Maya Zinshtain captures the action on and off the pitch and takes an unflinching look at how the team’s travails mirror those of the region.



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Seed: The Untold Story

Partners: Collective Eye; distributed by Cargo Film & Releasing

Length/volume: 1 x 84 minutes, 1 x 60 minutes

Premiered: March 2016 (Washington DC)

Rights available: Worldwide

Over the course of the last century, a whopping 94% of North America's seed varieties have vanished. As biotech chemical companies gain control over the majority of seeds remaining, a consortium of scientists, environmental activists, lawyers and seed farmers is attempting to preserve what's left of the natural diversity in the seed world, and preserve it for generations to come. Directed by Jon Betz and Taggart Siegel, and with acclaimed actor Marisa Tomei on board as an executive producer, *Seed* depicts how a variety of self-proclaimed "seed savers" are fighting to preserve humanity's 12,000-year relationship with the mighty, magical seed.



The Talk

Partners: Thirteen Productions for WNET; distributed by PBS International

Length/volume: 1 x 120 minutes

Airing: 2017, air date TBD (PBS)

Rights available: Worldwide

In the wake of several incidents in the U.S. that have shone the spotlight on police brutality against people of color, this two-hour program focuses on the conversation parents of color have with their children, particularly boys, concerning how to act when in situations with the police. The film collects five stories from five directors – including *Boyz N The Hood* helmer John Singleton – that present the perspectives of parents, kids and police, with an aim towards creating much-needed dialogue and fostering understanding between everyone impacted by racial tensions in America.



Undressed

Partners: Magnolia Italy for Nove; distributed by Zodiak Rights

Length: 20 x 30 minutes (UK series 1), 40 x 30 minutes (Italian series 1); 60 minutes (format)

Premiered: January 2016 (Nove)

Rights available: Format rights available worldwide

Cutting to the chase has been a key element of unscripted formats as of late, ever since *Married at First Sight* put couples at the altar without having them first indulge in that tedious courtship stuff. In this Italian format, two strangers meeting each other for the first time climb into a bed together and subsequently unveil themselves – literally, by taking off their clothes but remaining in their underwear, and metaphorically, by discussing their lives and following prompts designed to promote intimacy from a giant TV screen. First airing on Discovery Networks International's Nove channel in Italy, the format has headed to the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland, and Australia, with more territories sure to follow. •

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Backyard Builds (8 x 30 min) – Reno/Lifestyle

When indoor space isn't enough, *Backyard Builds* showcases the endless opportunities outdoor areas can provide without breaking the bank. Contractor and designer Brian McCourt and design expert Sarah Keenleyside work with homeowners to maximize their backyard potential and create tailored, one-of-a-kind structures. Whether it's a yoga studio, recording facility, whimsical jungle gym, tiki bar, bowling alley or an al fresco dining area with a kitchen, this contractor and designer duo can extend any living space on a budget.



\$ave My Reno (14 x 30 min) – Reno/Lifestyle

Cash-conscious homeowners finally catch a break when Sebastian Clovis, the savvy contractor with contagious energy, and Sabrina Smelko, the resourceful DIY designer, toss out overpriced reno quotes and make dreams come true by slashing budgets and using their ingenuity. Sebastian and Sabrina save by putting homeowners to work and hunting for salvaged goods. Sabrina is a wiz at finding restored pieces at great prices while creating amazing designs and crafted items and Sebastian is the master at smart spends and custom surprises. Together, they give homeowners the reno they want on a budget they can afford.



My Baby's Having a Baby

(10 x 1hr) - Docu-follow/Reality

Young Moms, most in their late 30s and early 40s, deal with their teenage daughters -their babies - having babies. These women, forced into the "Granny Club" much sooner than expected - deal with challenges of being both grandmother and mother to a new

generation of young women who seem to be repeating their own history. As mothers and daughters deal with the constant conflict of clashing parenting styles, financial constraints, and uncertain futures - in the end, the love and support for each other provides the inspiration that will keep viewers coming back.



Worst to First (10 x 60 minutes) – Reno/Lifestyle

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BY DANIELE ALCINII



“I Will Survive”

Even after two decades, the survival genre continues to be a staple of unscripted television.

But as audiences look for more relatable reality, producers and networks behind the fare are looking for ways to balance the authentic with the incredible.

The roots of the “survival” television genre stretch back to 1994 when British instructor Ray Mears developed several projects focused on wilderness survival for UK pubcaster BBC. Serene and somewhat didactic in nature, such series as *Tracks* and *World of Survival* featured Mears educating viewers on the necessary skills one would need to survive in the wild.

Six years later, CBS introduced reality competition series *Survivor* to the American marketplace. Adapted from SVT Sweden’s *Expedition Robinson*, developed by Charlie Parsons in 1994 but not airing until 1997, the series loudly lit the spark for reality shows centered on outdoor endurance.

That spark ignited brighter still when Canada’s Outdoor Life Network debuted Cream Productions and Wilderness Spirit Productions’ *Survivorman* in 2005. The series – which later aired on Discovery and was in April renewed for an eighth season on Science Channel – features Canadian survivalist Les Stroud surviving alone with no food or shelter for up to 10 days in remote locales. The program, perhaps predictably, delivered big ratings for Discovery in the 25-54 male demo. The show’s success saw the network reaching

deeper into the genre, spawning subsequent programs in the field that have included Diverse Productions’ *Man vs. Wild*; Original Media’s *Dual Survival*; and Renegade83’s *Man, Woman, Wild* and *Naked and Afraid*.

“Viewers no longer crave the inorganic, formatted and ‘hand of production’-heavy shows that were popular years ago,” explains Craig Piligian, whose Pilgrim Media Group is producing Discovery Channel’s latest survival competition series, *The Wheel*, which sees survivalists

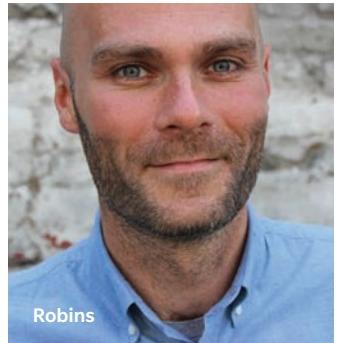
conquering eight different ecosystems – from tundra to desert – at random.

Speaking with *realscreen* in March, Piligian said the program will somewhat recall Discovery’s Mark Burnett-produced *Eco-Challenge*, which aired on the net from 1995 until 2000. The “wheel” element of the show refers to an on-screen wheel graphic that

will operate independently, and, ultimately, dictate the next locale for participants. The “last person standing” will win the series.

“For a series to succeed now, it must have a simple premise rooted in true-life scenarios that are relatable to everyone,” he says.

Survival has remained successful even in the midst of shifting viewership habits. At its core, the survival genre works across the viewing spectrum when producers and





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networks alike understand that it's not necessarily about the physicality of the challenges or the ability to skin a rabbit, but rather the highlighting of an individual's ability, through mental fortitude, to push through in really extreme situations.

That approach to the survival competition can be seen in such recent hits as History's *Alone*, from Leftfield Pictures, or the Bear Grylls-fronted *The Island* for Channel 4.

It's in this territory, friendlier to co-viewing, that London-based prodco October Films has managed to thrive. Most recently, the company was behind the six-part expedition series, *Mygrations*, for National Geographic Channel, in which a "human herd" tracks the migration of wildebeests in a 200-mile, six-week journey from the Serengeti to the Mara River in Tanzania.

October was also the prodco behind the Levison Wood-fronted survival series *Walking the Nile* and *Walking the Himalayas*, both for UK pubcaster Channel 4, pulling in an average 2.6 million and 2.2 million viewers, respectively.

"The *Walking* [franchise] proved that you can reach an old or young, female or male audience because, if the journey's real and it takes you somewhere, you want to go and experience that," October creative director Matt Robins tells *realscreen*, noting that *Walking the Americas* is slated to air in early 2017 across Channel 4. "That's why we develop in this territory – we're always looking for ways to understand human experience and tell stories from extreme places."

But through the genre's history, questions of safety consistently arise. How do producers ensure that all contestants remain physically unharmed, mentally resilient and, most importantly, stay alive?

For October, it meant enduring a three-month development period in Tanzania where producers scouted migration routes that would not only challenge the human herd, but also generate visually stunning sequences. The company also brought in

leading Serengeti park rangers to identify and circumvent the paths populated by dangerous predators such as crocodiles and lions.

"There are some risks you can mitigate, and [you] can train and educate people to be aware of what's happening around them and what to look for, but there are some risks – mostly human – that are less predictable," says Robins, noting that Levison Wood suffered a broken arm when his taxi plunged 150 feet off a cliff during *Walking the Himalayas*, while the *Mygrations* herd came across poacher traps and were faced with the decision to either dismantle the traps or to protect themselves and move along.

The safety stakes get upped exponentially when factoring children into a production, says Naked Entertainment's CEO and founder Simon Andreae.

Naked's upcoming fact-ent survival series *Stripped and Stranded* (w/t) for Channel 5 follows fractured families as they're marooned on a deserted tropical island off the coast of Panama for five days, relying on each other for support and survival.

According to Andreae, the series serves as a family drama set in the wilderness that uses the element of seclusion as an antagonist to

hopefully bring a family together.

"We needed to find environments that, to the families, felt maximally treacherous but locales we knew would ultimately be safe without us stepping in – that's quite a difficult balance to maintain," says Andreae, who also serves as an executive producer on the series and previously developed Discovery's runaway hit *Naked and Afraid*.

"The biggest hazards and uncertainties we had in production were not ultimately about the physical survival of the family; it was about their emotional trajectory," he adds.

As such, psychologists carefully vet participants to determine whether the experience will negatively affect them in so far as they can see. The psychologists then issue recommendations about whether the family unit and the individuals within it



Levison Wood has logged some serious mileage in the *Walking* franchise.

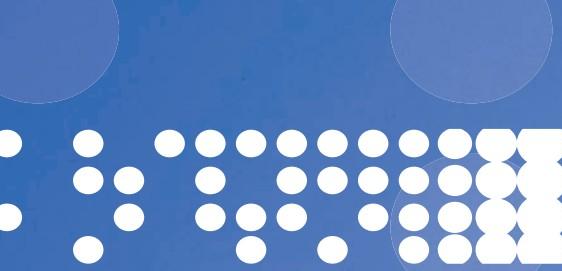
are mentally and physically fit enough to undertake the challenge.

"We're pretty careful to ensure we're putting the right families into the right sort of environment, with the right sort of pressures, to ensure they'll come out of it stronger than when they went in," Andreae emphasizes.

As Piligian asserts, in the wake of an era where over-produced reality served as the dominant form of unscripted television, audiences are increasingly gravitating toward material that speaks to the authentic, while reminding them that humans are capable of incredible things.

"We have three or four concepts in development that are really radical swings," Robins says. "I think the next iteration of survival will be rubbing another genre up against it – is there a gamified version of survival? Is there something we can do around faith and religion in the survival space?"

"My hope for the genre," he summarizes, "is that it finds ways to continue to be authentic and allows real experience to come out on the screen."



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Stormy Weather

BY BARRY WALSH

In recent years, big players in the global formats industry looked at China as a potential gold mine, and for good reason. According to a report from PwC, projected revenue for pay-TV subscriptions in China by 2019 will sit at a whopping US\$24.11 billion. With more than 3,200 television stations broadcasting, and a seemingly insatiable appetite for Western formats (episodes of *China's Got Talent*, for example, have clocked more than 400 million viewers), doing business with the country of 1.4 billion seemed flush with opportunity.

That enthusiasm dampened with the announcement in June of revamped regulations from national media regulator, the State Administration

of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (commonly known as SARFT). In a move deemed "protectionist" by interested parties such as the Format Recognition and Protection Association (FRAPA), the regulator limited the number of imported formats airing during primetime on satellite channels to two, and the number of new imported formats to one per year – which would have to air outside of primetime.

This development, combined with other recent geopolitical happenings – instability in Turkey,

Geopolitical instability, restrictions from government regulatory bodies and media consolidation are emerging as impediments to the growth of the global format industry. How should format creators and distributors ride out the storm?

"Our criticism is towards the China system but certainly not the Chinese TV industry," he says. "I feel from them a great willingness and positivity towards working with Western companies, in a fruitful way for all parties. They feel just as frustrated about the protectionist system that these regulations have imposed on them, and they're trying to find all kinds of loopholes to try to keep business running with Western companies."

While SARFT maintains the regulations are meant to not only promote "the Chinese dream, core

which led to the cancellation of DISCOP Istanbul this year; the outcome of the Brexit vote – as well as the ongoing wave of consolidation impacting the television industry, has those in the business of creating and shopping formats globally watching closely.

WORKING FOR THE CLAMPDOWN

"Everybody knew that this was going to happen sooner or later," says Jan Salling, FRAPA co-chairman and CEO of Missing Link Media, of the SARFT foreign format clampdown. But while adding that the regulations have had an immediate impact on revenues coming to distributors from China, he also emphasizes that the Chinese television industry itself is equally hampered by them.

socialist values, patriotism, traditional Chinese culture and the national spirit," but also the country's ability to craft exportable entertainment, potential partners believe the moves will further isolate Chinese creatives and their content.

"I don't believe that you can have a dynamic and creative international industry and at the same time strictly regulate the creative exchange of content," says Avi Armoza, CEO of Tel Aviv-based format developer and distributor Armoza Formats. "The opposite is usually true – when you have diversity and free exchange of ideas you give yourself the best chance of generating the most creative concepts."

"The regulations also bring about a concern that rather than encouraging creativity, they encourage copycat shows or content with similarities to existing international formats," he adds.

Michel Rodrigue, CEO and partner for consultancy The Format People, counts broadcaster and producer Star China Media as one of his clients. While Star Media has partnered in the past with Western format producers and creators on Chinese adaptations of *So You Think You Can Dance* and *The Voice*, the updated regulations will somewhat rewrite the rule book on how such partnerships function. If projects co-developed with foreign companies share the IP rights, they are then under the same restrictions as foreign formats.

One potential work-around, therefore, involves ceding the IP to the Chinese company, while giving the foreign company a more attractive share in the back end – perhaps an exclusive international distribution deal.

"It's very hard to explain to, say, a British company that if an idea is co-developed with a Chinese company and it's greenlit, everyone will have to agree that the IP will belong to the Chinese company," explains Rodrigue. "So for the foreign partner, in order to get some return on





Di Crescenzo



Armoza



Salling



Rodrigue

their creativity, they have to have an exclusive deal for distribution. Instead of sharing the IP, they can still share the revenue."

Ultimately, it's in the best interests of the Chinese television industry and its foreign partners to find ways to collaborate while working within the parameters imposed by SARFT. "China is interested in formats with a great track record," says Arabelle Pouliot Di Crescenzo, managing director at New York-based KABO International. "They only want the best." Thus, having access to the best – or highest-rating – formats from around the globe will require both sides to find the right balance between imported formats and original Chinese productions.

"Finding this balance will be crucial, since China is still seeking to be part of the international TV industry and they are unlikely to be able to both restrict imports while aiming to export their content," says Armoza.

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

While, as Salling says, the updated Chinese regulations have had a direct impact on the industry, the fallout from the Brexit vote in the UK, which saw a majority vote to leave the European Union, is less cut-and-dry. Salling wonders, "Is there any politician willing to pull the trigger and do it?" Still, he acknowledges that the financial instability – or threat of such – stemming from the vote will most probably take a toll. He points to ITV's recent report stating its plan to trim some £25 million, or US\$33 million, from its overhead for 2017, which will result in job losses.

"While there is a lot of fear of the unknown, especially relating to financial repercussions, I believe that where there is a business reason and a will, there will always be a way – new solutions and opportunities that might otherwise have never been explored will ultimately open up to fill any gaps," offers Armoza. "In addition, the UK market has traditionally been more of an exporter of content and one potential outcome of the Brexit vote might be a longer term opening up to the international formats market as an importer."

What appears to be a far more pressing problem than the currently nebulous impact of Brexit is what Salling refers to as the "brain drain" resulting from the massive trend towards consolidation in the television industry.

"Superindies have always had a hard time in capturing creativity," he maintains. "And when they become 'megas,' if the creative individuals in the [acquired] companies don't have to stay, they will leave and start new companies."

Armoza points to the impact the M&A frenzy has had on competition as another factor in the equation.

"It has significantly reduced the level of competition, and it is only with true competition that you find maximal creativity," he says. "In addition, consolidation can lead companies to focus more on internal goings-on and less on finding new ways to generate creativity, while often

losing the flexibility to react quickly to market needs."

Salling cites examples of some larger entities, such as Sony Pictures Television, moving away from third-party formats acquisitions in order to create formats through their own stable of prodcos and perhaps recoup more of the investments made in building their stables.

"You should already have the best of the best in every territory," he says of the mega-indies. "But we aren't seeing the fresh formats coming."

"While there is a lot of fear of the unknown, where there is a business reason and a will, there will always be a way, and new solutions and opportunities."

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Still, even in the midst of rough waters, the execs polled by *realscreen* take solace in the fact that every storm subsides. Both Salling and Rodrigue point to the creative and financial opportunities inherent in emerging, smaller markets, with Rodrigue touting South America and South Korea as "very creative" territories, and Salling also heralding South Korea in addition to strong recent players such as Israel and Turkey as creative hot spots.

Besides, if one thinks of the original meaning of "chaos" as the state preceding the creation of the universe, then a little bit of chaos should be a good thing... right?

"There are still cultural barriers between the East and the West and even between different European countries and new protectionist measures that pop up around the world," says Di Crescenzo. "But, in general, in the more than 15 years that I have been involved in format distribution, I see the market growing and spreading all over the world."

"You need that passion and love for what you do," sums up Salling. "And sometimes, you need to be under pressure."



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Cutting to the



Twofour's *This Time Next Year* has been licensed into 30 territories, prior to its UK debut.

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A British production company has noticed audiences for reality shows that hinge around a transformation are tuning in for the beginning and the end, but skipping the middle.

"We're struggling to keep people through a single narrative hour," Twofour Group chief executive Melanie Leach explained during a formats session at Realscreen West in June. "We thought, 'Why don't we be bold and skip the middle bit because people aren't interested in the journey anymore.'"

Leach and her team put that anecdotal insight to work in *This Time Next Year*, a format that Twofour has licensed into 30 territories. Ten of those territories are in production even though the UK version – due to premiere on ITV1 and featuring Davina McCall of *Big Brother UK* – has not yet aired.

The pitch: in a studio there are two doors. One says 'This Time' and the other says 'Next Year.' A person walks through the 'This Time' door and chats with a host about a goal they want to achieve by "this time next year." It could be losing weight, having a baby, finding a long-lost relative, making the

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

chase

Olympic team. They explain how they will do it. The host bids good luck and sends them back through the door.

The host then turns to the studio audience and asks, "Do you think they can do it?" They don't have to wait long to find out. In a time-travel twist, the person returns through the 'Next Year' door moments later and reveals whether or not they attained the goal.

"This show literally sold itself as a sentence to everyone in the room," said Leach.

Part talk show, part *Biggest Loser*, part *American Idol* audition show, *This Time Next Year* takes the before-and-after concept and delivers it at warp speed. Execs at the London-based company are so confident they have a hit that they are already bracing for rip-offs.

To pre-empt copycats, Twofour is developing a property makeover show and a business show based on similar "day-one-to-day-365" transformations.

"This Time Next Year is not like any other production I've worked on, which is the most exciting element of it," says Andrew Mackenzie, Twofour Group's chief creative officer. "That is proving to be the appeal to networks and producers around the world. It's a genuinely new idea."

That may be so in the aspirational space, but rearranged narratives are a recent trend in dating formats. Red Arrow International's social experiment series *Married At First Sight* puts the wedding before the courtship, while Banijay Group's *Undressed* puts two strangers in a studio with a bed and asks them to get undressed before they get to know each other. Another Red Arrow format, *Kiss Bang Love*, skips the first date and goes straight for the make-out session.

This Time Next Year stands apart with its year-long production timeline and predictive casting process.

"It's a bit of a mindf**k, to be honest," Mackenzie tells *realscreen* in an interview ahead of season one's second studio shoot in September.

ITV's six-episode first season will feature five to six people in each 44-minute episode. At the outset, Twofour wanted a minimum of 48 people for the series so they cast and shot 85, figuring a percentage would not attain their stated goal.

"A lot of the pledges they make are outlandish," he says. "A 33-stone man wanted to lose 10-stone. That's a serious amount of weight. We had six different people who came on wanting babies and all of them have had significant problems getting pregnant. You're playing a numbers game."

The pledges fall into six categories: body change, babies and family, finding someone/reunion, life achievement, love, and "the wild card."

Producers are finding the outcomes, even when positive, are often unpredictable. A double amputee in a wheelchair who said he would walk his wife down the aisle is now walking but is no longer with his wife. Meanwhile, a couple who promised to lose weight together broke up after one failed to meet the goal.

With few exceptions, the idea is that the audience instantly knows if the person has attained the goal the moment they re-enter the studio a year later. "When the doors open the audience has to judge straight away whether they've done it," says Mackenzie.

Between studio days, the production is minimal. A scaled-down team monitors the cast's progress and keeps them motivated. Twofour has also created a closed Facebook group to encourage cast members to motivate each other.

To determine how to allocate production over the year, producers immediately cut the first studio footage and ranked people on "a fairly brutal" A, B or C storyline criteria.

Initially, producers scheduled a lot of shoots but found the most emotionally revelatory moments are coming from

Twofour's *This Time*

Next Year aims to revamp the transformational genre with a clever twist and a little "time travel."

self-shot moments rather than professionally shot footage. For example, the family of a 16-year-old boy who lost his voice in a bungled tracheotomy filmed him speaking again for the first time, in a croaky voice, in a phone call to his grandmother.

"If someone who said they were desperate for a baby walks out with a baby, that is remarkable, but what you don't want to do is cut back to them getting their first baby scan three months in," says Mackenzie. "It's redundant."

Continuity is also an issue. The production is designed to avoid the need for shot-matching, but the concept meant producers had to deny host Davina McCall's request to cut her bangs. "She's got a beautiful blue dress that is in a vacuum seal and she will be wearing it in exactly the same way as she was for the first studio [shoot]," he says.

Mackenzie puts ITV's version of *This Time Next Year* "on the higher end of lifestyle but the lower end of the entertainment" budget scale. Indeed, some European nets have scaled down the format with smaller budgets. "It's a heck of a commitment," says Mackenzie. "You can't pilot this show."

It's too early to tell how each version of the format will differ in style. However, the Australian version that will air on Nine Network is diverging from the UK version in one major way.

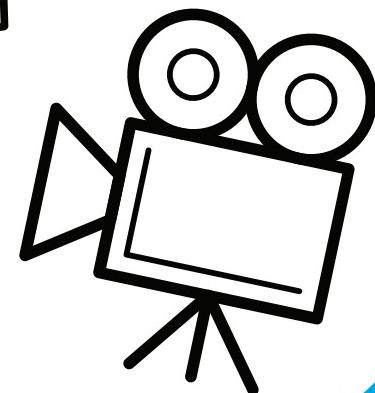
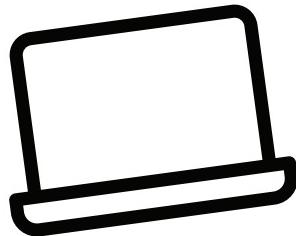
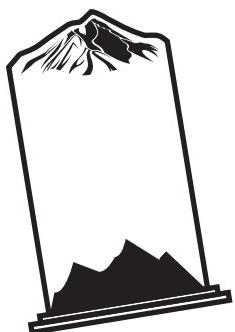
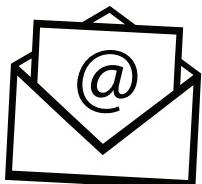
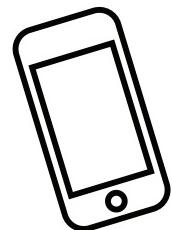
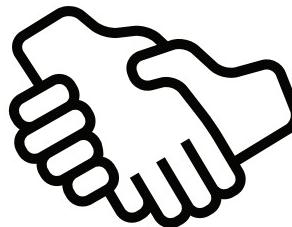
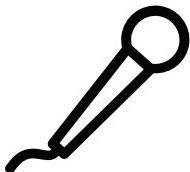
Producers have cast a few terminally ill people, including a man who appeared in the first studio shoot with his wife and vowed they would run in one last marathon together. A year later, will he walk back out or will his wife walk out alone? It's too dark a question to ask in the UK version.

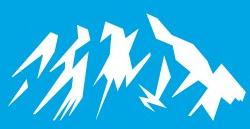
That's not to say there won't be failures on ITV's version. Funny failures or relatable characters that just didn't pull off their goals will be brought back on to ensure there is a sense of jeopardy with the concept.

"We're making an entertainment show and the spirit of the show is life-affirming," Mackenzie says. •

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FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Voyage of Time, 12 years in the making, will be released in a 45-minute IMAX version and a 90-minute feature version.

Terrence Malick's first foray into documentary takes audiences on a poetic journey from the birth of the universe, through astrophysical and microbial worlds, to the dinosaur age and the present day. **BY KEVIN RITCHIE**

Like many science films, Terrence Malick's *Voyage of Time* is a rigorously fact-checked documentary made in collaboration with top scientific minds. Unlike most science films, those facts are meant to be experienced, as well as understood.

Much like the American director's narrative films *The Tree of Life*, *To the Wonder* and *Knight of Cups*, *Voyage of Time* overlays the physical world with spiritual and philosophical musings to meditate on what we currently regard as the unknowable.

"It celebrates the mystery of science by asking questions that scientists ask of themselves," explains producer Nicolas Gonda. "It infuses in the viewer a sense of curiosity and emotion that one might not normally experience looking at the crude facts of science."

Voyage of Time had its world premiere in competition at the Venice Film Festival before moving on to screen at the Toronto International Film Festival. Its producers are framing its creative approach – and distribution strategy – as a new way forward for natural history films.

Malick has been talking about *Voyage of Time* for four decades, but only started working on the project in earnest in 2003 after receiving a grant from the National Geographic Society. He used time-lapse footage of seeds sprouting in his second film, *Days of Heaven*, and incorporated

segments on the birth of the universe in *Tree of Life*, but a doc would be a different undertaking.

Over the next 12 years, producers Sarah Green and Gonda would get a crash course in the history of the universe. Armed with a list of a "dream team" of physicists, biologists and natural historians Malick wanted to work with, they began reaching out and found many were drawn to the director's approach, including lead advisor Andrew Knoll, a natural history professor at Harvard University.

"Often we hear things like, 'Public outreach doesn't get you tenure in a university,'" says Gonda. "So spending the time and resources to visualize this science in such a beautiful way is looked at as extracurricular. It was a rare opportunity for the scientific advisors to collaborate on something like this."

IMAX, sales agent Wild Bunch and distributor Broad Green Pictures also came on board.

Whether working with actors or editing, Malick likes to have room to experiment, improvise and make discoveries. For his producers, the challenge would be to create a scientifically

sound documentary that also allowed the director room to be creative.

To oversee visual effects, the producers brought in supervisor Dan Glass (*Batman Begins*) who sketched out ideas for Malick. Historically

accurate dinosaurs were created in CG, while rough scientific data on things such as celestial events from billions of years ago was fed into supercomputers on university campuses across the U.S. to create visualizations.

Glass would then enhance those images for the big screen, all

the while conferring with the advisory team to ensure colors, bursts of light and movement were backed up by data. Photography from the Hubble Space Telescope, NASA's interplanetary space probes and the Solar Dynamic Observatory was also incorporated.

Glass and Malick also built a "laboratory" in a garage in Austin to experiment with in-camera visuals. Dubbed Skunkworks, the lab included smoke machines, chemicals and a water tank that was lit from all sides. This process allowed Malick

**"Voyage of Time
celebrates the
mystery of science
by asking questions
scientists ask of
themselves."**



Terrence Malick and effects supervisor Dan Glass built a laboratory in Austin to experiment with in-camera visuals and improvise with effects the way a director would with actors on set.

to improvise with effects the way he might with an actor on set.

"We did very low-tech stuff that was very inexpensive. It really helped to inform where to take the visual effects," says Green. "It was like a playground with smoke, fire, explosions, chemicals and liquids."

Footage from the "low-tech" shoots would then be given to Glass. "One of the mandates for those of us working in the visual effects realm was to never allow for a shot to be completely inorganic," says Gonda. "From the dinosaurs to the astrophysical and microbial, you'll always find one ingredient that is alive."

Concurrently to the visual effects, Malick sent camera people to locations around the world, including Iceland, Hawaii, Australia, Kenya and Chile. Cinematographer Paul Atkins worked with Malick to create a visual look similar to the style the director had developed with his long-time DP, Emmanuel Lubezki.

Rather than shoot from a distance with a telephoto lens, Malick wanted everything shot in deep focus with wide-angle lenses that required crews to get so close to subjects that the soles of Atkins' boots melted while filming molten lava with a 40mm lens.

Smaller camera rigs are making it easier for filmmakers to execute complex sequences; however, shooting with IMAX cameras made the underwater sequences on *Voyage* particularly challenging.

"A full load of 65mm film only allows for three minutes of shooting, after which you must surface, swim back to the boat, lift the 300 lb. rig out of the water, and re-load it," Atkins says in the film's press notes. "By the time you're back in the water, your subject has long gone."

Camera crews spent weeks in the field, capturing "miles" of footage – of chimpanzees, for example – that Malick would then sift through to find

moments. Malick also gave lo-fi Harinezumi digital cameras to people around the world to capture lo-fi, dream-like imagery of contemporary times that would remind viewers of "our place in the ebb-and-flow" of the natural world.

"As far as your typical, blue-chip natural history documentary goes, that time is over," says Sophokles Tasioulis of Berlin-based Sophisticated Films. "We've filmed every river and every mountain. The audience wants to see more. Either you introduce a bit of scripted drama or you bring in a filmmaker like Terrence Malick who takes a very different approach to documentary."

A producer on the blue-chip BBC natural history docs *Planet Earth* and *Deep Blue*, Tasioulis brought expertise in financing and distributing big-event docs to the project.

On October 7, IMAX and Broad Green Pictures will open the 45-minute *Voyage of Time: The IMAX Experience*, narrated by Brad Pitt, in 13 institutional IMAX cinemas. Meanwhile, the 90-minute, 35mm feature cut narrated by Cate Blanchett, entitled *Voyage of Time: Life's Journey*, will simultaneously start rolling out overseas in Australia, France, Japan and other markets.

In the IMAX cut, Pitt's narration includes factual signposts whereas Blanchett's voice-over in the theatrical cut walks a line between spiritual and earthly dimensions. ("Mother, where are you?" she says at the beginning of the film. "Am I not your child?")

The dual release strategy is designed to play to market strengths. Theatrical docs do stronger business overseas – the exceptions being *Fahrenheit*

**"We've filmed
every river
and every
mountain. The
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to see more."**

9/11 and *March of the Penguins* – whereas 70-80% of the IMAX box office is in North America.

"After a year, we'll swap," Tasioulis explains, adding that traditional distributors expressed concern that the two versions would cannibalize each other. Tasioulis maintains that based on his experiences with *Planet Earth* and *Deep Blue*, the opposite is true.

"We hope *Voyage* can show that clearly there is a market for documentaries and it can be a viable business on a big scale."

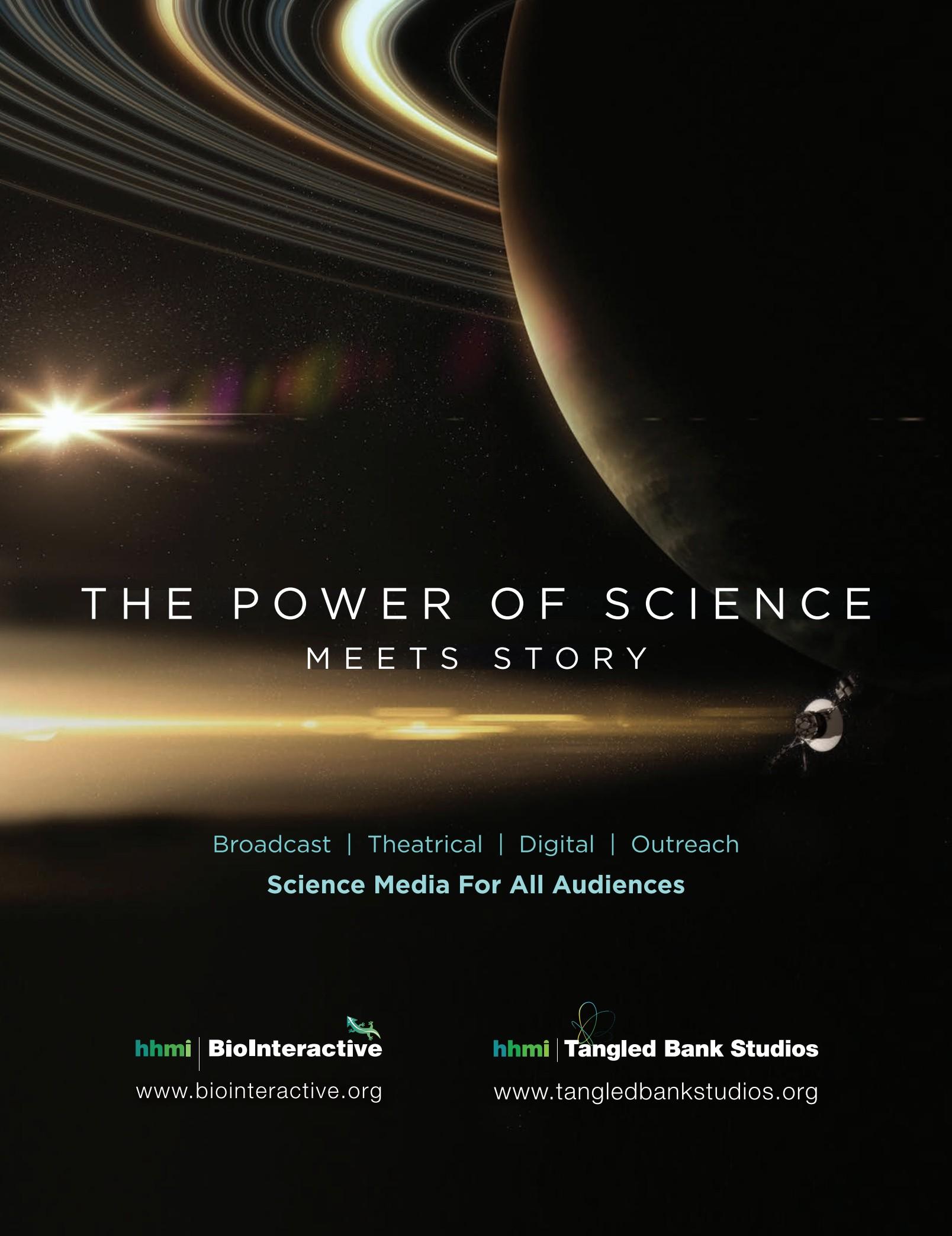
However, challenges still remain in the financing phase. Although Malick had treatments, there were no scripts and that made potential investors nervous.

Through its US\$50 million Film Fund, IMAX intends to produce 10-12 documentaries (three have been greenlit, including *Voyage*). The company provides 50% of the financing, leaving producers to rustle up the rest.

"The world is changing. We're looking to be a little less traditional," says IMAX Entertainment CEO Greg Foster. "A way to do that is by working with filmmakers who are really unique and innovative and offering something that maybe traditional documentary filmmakers aren't able to do."

"I'm excited for people to see both versions of *Voyage* and think about their place in the world and their responsibility to it," says Green.

"I think what Terry has done is really engaging. I would be thrilled if some of the great filmmakers out there took up that baton and did their own take on a nature story. That would be really exciting."



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Every blockbuster deserves a sequel, and game-changing natural history docs are no exception. *Realscreen* talks to the team behind the BBC's upcoming *Planet Earth II* for a sneak peek at the anticipated six-part series.

Natural history and wildlife programming have been focal points of the BBC's mandate since Desmond Hawkins and Frank Gillard promoted the establishment of the Natural History Unit (NHU), the specialist department within BBC Factual Production, in 1957.

Following in a long line of BBC nature documentaries and fueled by the success of 2001's landmark oceanic series *Blue Planet*, the NHU would commission its magnum opus in a joint venture with American cable network Discovery and Japan's NHK.

At a total cost of £8 million, *Planet Earth* served as the corporation's most ambitious and technologically advanced blue-chip program, as well as the first-ever documentary series to be produced in HD.

The natural history spectacular proved a commercial success even before premiering across the UK pubcaster in March of 2006, with the BBC having pre-sold the series to such overseas broadcasters as the ABC in Australia, CBC in Canada, WDR in Germany, Prime Television in New Zealand and C1R in Russia.

It would go on to pull in an average audience of 7.81 million viewers for the BBC, with critics celebrating the program's educational virtues and its striking cinematography. The rights to the series would eventually sell across 320 territories worldwide.

A decade on from the original, at last February's BBC Worldwide Showcase in Liverpool, England, the BBC confirmed



that the network's most recognizable series would receive a sequel, bowing this fall.

Planet Earth II is once again produced in-house by the BBC's NHU and features famed naturalist David Attenborough as narrator for the 6 x 50-minute series.

Previously known as *One Planet*, the series has been shot in Ultra HD and capitalizes on the latest advances in filming technology that have emerged over the last three years. Film crews employed drones, stabilized MoVI systems and remote recording as they explored Earth's ecosystems and the characteristic animals living within them.

"The significant advances in camera technology have really allowed us to

change the way you perceive the natural world," BBC series producer Tom Hugh-Jones tells *realscreen*. "Now we can get quite light rigs out into wild places which allow us to make people feel more like they're experiencing the natural world and meeting animals eye-to-eye, traveling with them and experiencing the wild places through their eyes."

Each episode of *Planet Earth II* will follow a similar format to the 2006 series by initially offering an overview of a different habitat on Earth, followed by a 10-minute, behind-the-scenes featurette.

Some of the most notable alterations in the sequel come in the form of the ecosystems

that have been explored (or re-explored) in the 10 years since. While Attenborough and the BBC return to investigate familiar biogeographical zones – jungles, deserts, mountains and grasslands – to uncover new behaviors, the series has now added island and city environments to its repertoire.

Mike Gunton, creative director for factual at BBC Worldwide and *Planet Earth II* executive producer, explains that the BBC was focused on spreading out the content to incorporate new areas and animals. The episode about islands, for instance, was developed to provide audiences a glimpse into the habitat's evolutionary importance: "They're almost a little microcosm of the planet – each one of them is a miniature planet."

Meanwhile, the human ecosystem – despite our increasing disconnect with nature – proved to be yet another significant biome for fauna due to the city's abundant resources.

"The highest density of leopards in the world is not in some forest in India, but actually in the city of Mumbai; the most successful peregrine falcons in the world live in New York City," Gunton says. "If you've got the right habitat and the right adaptability, a city can become a phenomenally good place for you to live."

Like its much-celebrated predecessor, the series will also include a 50-minute film spinoff from BBC Earth Films and Shanghai Media Group Pictures. Directed by award-winning filmmaker Peter Webber and a Chinese director yet to be announced, *Earth: One Amazing Day* will document one day on Earth and celebrate the daily dramas that occur in the natural world. The original film from 2007 – *Earth* – serves as the second highest grossing nature documentary released to date, having grossed US\$109 million worldwide. In an era of shrinking budgets, foreign

sales have become increasingly crucial to offset the pain of soaring production costs.

While natural history travels well and crosses platforms, it's rare to break even on a wildlife film due in part to the amount of time spent filming and in production – *Planet Earth II* has been in development for three years. The sophomore juggernaut, however, will segment its costs between the BBC's coproduction partners – BBC America,

ZDF and France Télévisions – thereby recouping the majority of expenditures.

"Because [our partners] each have a slightly different audience perspective, it's very good for us to open our eyes to how global audiences see our stuff," says Gunton. "It allows us to step outside of our British-focused perspective and that can only be a good thing."

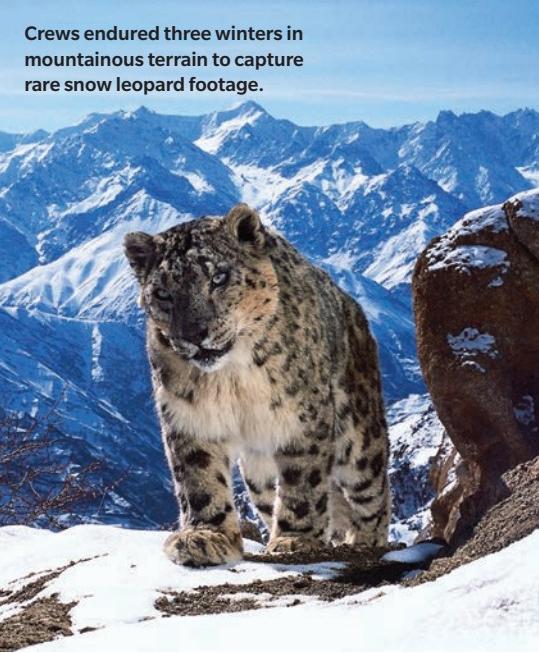
"One of the trickiest things we're always trying to conquer is trying to find new stories," he continues. "There's less and less material that hasn't been shown to work with, so we spend a long time trying to find new stories or come up with ways to tell old stories in fresh new ways."

As ever, when filming in the wild, it's unreasonable to expect the process to run completely smoothly. On an expansive series

such as *Planet Earth II*, each voyage to a rarely explored locale is fraught with curve balls and logistical nightmares, ranging from treacherous weather and visa complications, to broken equipment and camera-shy animals.

BBC crews endured three shoots over as many winters in the mountains in an attempt to film sparse snow leopard populations, before unearthing new evidence and utilizing the latest remote camera technology to get the shot.

"How do you find a snow leopard when you've got thousands of square miles of mountain? The only way we were able to



do it was that we discovered that they had the same problem, and so they've got scent marking rocks that they rub their chins and faces on, and then they leave urine scent on these rocks," Hugh-Jones explains. "We knew then that if they're going to go there, if we put our remote camera trap there, we'd be able to get footage of them."

The episode includes the first time that four snow leopards have been filmed together, as a mother and cub become trapped in a fight between two rival males.

Ahead of the first public screening at Cannes' MIPCOM market on October 18, BBC Worldwide has licensed the series to Sweden's SVT and Danish pubcaster DR, as well as Italian broadcaster Mediaset, who will serve as an "in association with" partner in Italy. Other unnamed international broadcasters have also signed on to the series.

Forthcoming projects in the unit's pipeline include sister series *Oceans* (w/t), slated to air in 2017/18; and the Game of Thrones-inspired wildlife series *Dynasty* (w/t), scheduled for 2018.



Making a splash
on Smithsonian
Channel's *The Wildest
Shot: Inside Nature's
Best Photography*.

BY CARL MROZEK

CLOSING IN ON 4K

The best natural history content has the ability to transport the viewer through a combination of hard-won access to the natural world and cutting-edge cinematography. Naturally, the advent of 4K programming is particularly attractive to networks, producers and distributors of natural history material.

THE EARLY ADOPTERS

"Our business model is based on delivering the highest quality programming possible and our OTT service, Smithsonian Earth, is all about 4K programming," says David Royle, EVP, programming and production at Smithsonian Channel. "We have 150-plus hours of 4K programs in hand or underway, many of them in the natural history genre."

Indeed, the network is known for being an aggressive proponent of the 4K format, bridging the divide between an increasingly 4K OTT landscape and HD TV with an all-4K commissioning policy. "Everything we commission now must be in 4K whether it's for the [cable] channel or for streaming on Smithsonian Earth," says Royle.

Some prodcos specializing in natural history are also diving headlong into 4K. The UK's Silverback Films, behind such projects as *Chimpanzee* for Disneynature and 2019's *Our Planet* eight-parter for Netflix, is at the forefront, now working exclusively in 4K.

"We're committed to making the very best

natural history films on earth and 4K enhances our ability to do so," offers Alastair Fothergil, executive producer and company director. Silverback's seven-part series for BBC America, *The Hunt*, documented the predator-prey relationship and was its first mainly 4K project.

A driving force behind Silverback's plunge into all-4K production was a spinoff of that series, a doc feature for IMAX called *Incredible Predators*. "A great advantage of working in 4K is that, unlike HD, 4K resolution is sufficient for IMAX, which enabled us to kill two birds with one stone," Fothergil explains.

4K natural history programming is also creating a niche market for some distributors, such as Canada's Blue Ant International, which sells 4K shows from its Love Nature channel into the global marketplace. "A few years ago, we decided to future proof our Love Nature library by producing everything in 4K," says Solange Attwood, SVP for Blue Ant International. "By 2015 we had more than 175 hours, much of which we took to MIP."

"We found plenty of buyers," she continues. "Some specifically want nature but others simply want a block of 4K shows to showcase their new 4K channels or OTT services, which our nature shows do nicely."

Attwood points to Asia as "the epicenter for 4K," as Japan and Korea have had 4K outlets for some time and China now has several on offer as well. But the global market is heating up. "Having

4K may not be the next 'new thing' for TV in general, but it may well be the Next Big Thing for natural history producers and distributors. At least that's how it looks to some in the business of delivering natural history programs to a global audience.

4K has opened new markets for our shows in more than 50 linear channels and OTT outlets, globally," she says.

Producing in 4K is fast becoming a pragmatic choice for distributors with strong natural history catalogs, such as ZDF Enterprises. "Most of our natural history docs have shelf lives of five or so years," says Nikolas Huelbusch, director of ZDF Enterprises Factual. "So it makes perfect sense for new ones to be made in 4K. We partnered on Jasper James' *Why Size Matters* because it's a big science story with a five-to-seven year distribution cycle including VOD, OTT and free TV."

Huelbusch also says 4K was "perfect" for *Deep Ocean*, a 2 x 50-minute look at deep sea creatures, coproduced with Japan's NHK, which has a long track record in 4K production, and has just launched a 4K/8K test broadcast channel.

Fumina Koike, product manager for NHK's global content development and programming department, says the Japanese public broadcaster has 46 natural history programs totaling 38 hours on hand, including *The*



Deep Ocean is one of NHK's latest natural history programs making use of 4K, and coproduced with ZDFE. ▶

Great Amazon and *Deep Ocean*, and is starting work on a 6 x 60-minute series with NHNZ later this year. "Most of the natural history programs are in 4K, but some may be upconverted to 8K for broadcast during the first months of the test broadcast," she says. "After September we'll broadcast some of them only in 4K so that people can watch them at home on their 4K TVs."

TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE

Part of the attraction to 4K for natural history broadcasters and producers lies in its hyper-detail, which creates an opening for new subjects previously considered too small or dull for TV, such as those without big fangs and claws. "With 4K, viewers can experience nature in its infinite variety, and in vivid detail, especially at the micro and

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macro levels," says Royle. "We've done stories on many new subjects, geckos, lizards, spiders and frogs, including the tiny rainforest frogs of Central America. The world is full of rare and fascinating creatures for niche audiences."

Others, like Nat Geo Wild, are utilizing 4K's 'hyper-reality' to re-invent storytelling about familiar charismatic species such as lions, leopards, hyenas and elephants for jaded TV audiences. A new miniseries, *Savage Kingdom*, features character-driven storylines with dramatic predator-prey interactions and rivalries set in the marshes of Botswana, but in stunning detail in 4K.

"Currently, many of Nat Geo Wild's new shows are being shot in 4K or higher," says Janet Han Vissering, SVP of production and development for the network. "Natural history shows are evergreen and by shooting in the highest format possible, we are building up our inventory for future use.

"Many of the challenges with early HD are coming up with 4K, like how to warm up 4K's ultra-detailed imagery."

"As technology advances and becomes more favorable for shows shot at this level of high definition, we will have a vast library of 4K programs to service this evolving platform," she continues.

Still, it's worth noting that, at press time, neither Nat Geo nor Discovery would comment on any immediate plans to deliver programming in 4K.

Shifting to all-4K production entails many expensive challenges. "Filming wildlife in 4K is more challenging than HD," admits Royle. "The lens options are fewer and managing all that data is challenging, and demands more personnel, which inflates budgets by

15-30%. But natural history producers take well to challenges and have done a great job responding to those posed by 4K."

The flip side of 4K's ultra-detail and Rec. 2020's superior colorspace is an increased capacity for errors, which calls for extra scrutiny from colorists and others on the post-production team.

"We're developing new standards and practices for 4K post," says Attwood. "For quality control, we divide the screen into quadrants, and assign a QC person to each to spot defects like digital artifacts, dropouts, and pixelation that we 'fix in post', frame by frame.

"The absence of technical standards compels us to be more creative," she says.

The lack of universal technical standards for 4K places an extra burden on producers. "It may be a while before there is a consensus about what a good 4K show looks like," says Huelbusch. "Many of the challenges with early HD are coming up again with 4K, like how to warm up 4K's ultra-detailed but often cold imagery. Each production team must define the aesthetics of their own programs."

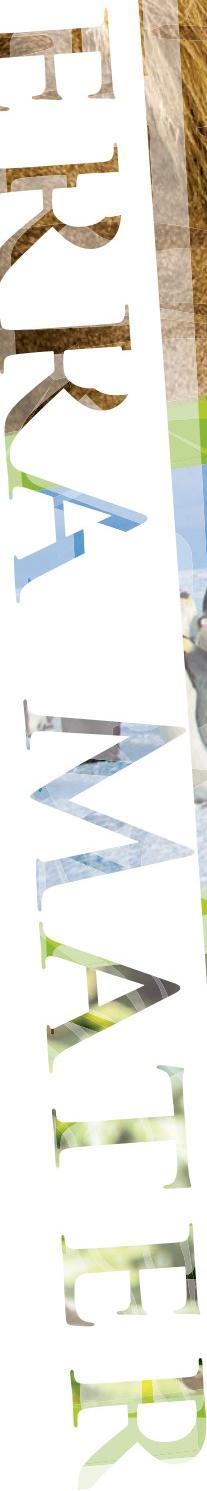
Still, lack of universal technical standards isn't keeping the early adopters from clamoring for 4K programming. Currently, there appears to be a global shortage of 4K content, creating something of a sellers' market for it. "Viewers are demanding 4K programs for their UHD TVs, and aren't as fickle as usual, as long as it looks good on their big screens," says Royle.

Free 4K TV, which is only in its infancy in Japan, is not yet on the horizon in the U.S. or Europe, where many broadcasters are still amortizing their hefty investments in digital HDTV, made less than a decade ago. However, with millions of UHD TVs already in homes in Asia, America and Europe, there is clearly a growing demand for 4K shows, much as there was for HD in the early days of HD. OTT, VOD and satellite delivery services have spotted the vacuum and are already filling the void with 4K content.

As in the early days of HD, blue-chip natural history programming, which appeals to a global audience, is clearly on the shopping lists of most early 4K content delivery services, creating new opportunities for producers and distributors alike.

"If I were a natural history producer today I'd be moving into 4K as fast as possible, to future-proof my work, and to keep up with the technological curve," offers Royle. "As a network, our challenge is to continually wow our audience. Delivering all of our shows in 4K is the best way to do that today."

(With files from Barry Walsh)



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ONE STEP BEYOND

With an all-star production team, ambitious feature film-style CGI and a slew of the top minds in space exploration on board, National Geographic Channel is aiming for new heights with its drama-doc hybrid *Mars*. BY BARRY WALSH

As far back as the late 1800s, Mars was firing up imaginations, with individuals such as Gustavus W. Pope, author of 1894's *Journey to Mars*, hypothesizing about life on the Red Planet and the potential for human beings to experience it themselves.

Today, thanks to the efforts of myriad space agencies and assorted benefactors, such imaginings are moving out of science fiction and into the realm of distinct possibility. With Elon Musk's Space X initiative, and the support and enthusiasm of other scientific innovators such as X Prize Foundation chairman Peter Diamandis, the move towards making humanity multi-planetary is gaining serious momentum.

This activity serves as what Radical Media president of media and entertainment Justin Wilkes calls the "science factual" backbone

of National Geographic Channel's upcoming miniseries, *Mars*. Premiering on November 13 across Nat Geo's global portfolio (and the day later in the U.S.), the drama-doc hybrid, coproduced by Radical Media and Imagine Entertainment, marries testimony from several of the big thinkers behind the current push to colonize Mars, with a scripted drama following the first group of explorers taking the plunge in 2033.

The "Mars movement" wasn't much on Wilkes' radar when he first heard word that there could be an opportunity to film a doc around Musk's Space X project. Indeed, he didn't know much about what the Tesla founder had in mind, but it became clearer after their first meeting.

"Whenever we investigate potential subjects, I always like to ask them why they'd want to make a documentary," he recalls. "He had an interesting answer, which was, 'I want to start

to build a constituency and a narrative for why I believe the human race needs to go to Mars.' And he said that he didn't necessarily want to be in it, but he wanted to tell the bigger story – why it's something we have to do, why it's imperative to become an interplanetary species and 'back up' the human race.

"When I left him I felt that it was so much bigger than a documentary and that we should try to do it as a multi-part series, and I also felt we needed to take people beyond 2016 and take them on that journey," he continues. "What would it be like to get to, and colonize, Mars?"

Having worked with Ron Howard and Brian Grazer on the Jay Z doc project, *Made in America*, Wilkes thought the *Mars* story would be "the perfect project to approach Imagine about." It was Howard, Grazer and partner Michael Rosenberg who proposed bringing it to National



Brian Grazer (left) and Ron Howard (right) came on board to produce *Mars* with Radical Media.

"Mars is like the mountain we can see on the horizon, capturing our imaginations as it has for centuries, and now we have the technology to make this push."

Geographic Channel, following their experience working with the Fox-owned network on the 'Breakthrough' anthology series in 2015.

"We did 'Breakthrough' with National Geographic and Courteney Monroe and we really loved working with her," says Grazer. "She's just so dynamic, and she can see the hook in something very quickly. I think she got this right away and wanted to expand it into something beyond the surface."

"The idea of blending narrative storytelling and docudrama was something she was excited to do," he adds. "It gives us the ability to humanize it, create more empathy for the characters, and, at the same time, make it sort of cost-effective."

"I give them a lot of credit for their creative ambition, to try to not only document what's going on in this moment but to use all of our cinematic capabilities to show what it's going to be like to actually go," offers Howard. "It's turning out to be a really interesting hybrid."

The premise behind the series allows the true story as it stands today – the efforts of various international space agencies and "astropreneurs" to fund and launch such a mission – to feed into the scripted drama.

As such, Howard says that while the bulk of the series "tilts to the scripted side," some episodes feature a scripted-to-doc ratio of 60 to 40%.

National Geographic Channel president Tim Pastore calls it "a marriage of a science fiction

film with epic documentary" and points to the globe-trotting shoots – touching down in Antarctica, Russia, and Hawaii for the doc component alone – as an indication of the project's scale.

When asked if *Mars* is among the most expensive programming swings undertaken by NGC thus far, network CEO Courteney Monroe says, "I think that's fair to say."

"When you talk about greater ambitions, they often come with greater price tags," says Pastore.

Bringing on director Everardo Gout (*Days of Grace*) to helm the scripted content, and award-winning CGI shop Framestore to create feature film-worthy effects also signal the ambition behind the project.

"We've pushed the boundaries of both the doc side and the scripted dramatization side and it has become a real labor of love for everyone involved," says Howard. "There is a lot of sweat equity in this, and I think we'll get unbelievable value for the television budget that we have on both ends."

"But the whole thing is an experiment," he muses. "We're shooting documentary stuff while we're scripting and shooting the material that derives from the information we're getting through the research and the interviews."

"It's a huge challenge and we don't have the luxury of spending a lot of time to experiment for a year to get the balance right," he concludes.

"It's television, and everyone is working around the clock to meet the deadlines and live up to the promise of this really ambitious idea."

"The challenge hasn't been as much about figuring out the format – we are very much approaching it as a singular narrative, so if you're getting the information from the documentary component or from the scripted characters, ultimately you're getting pulled along on this journey," says Wilkes.

"And the balance of what's doc and what's scripted has really come together beautifully in the edit because it's been about following our noses regarding where the story is going," he adds. "The harder part is about trying to build this world where it's been rooted in as much fact as possible, so we've held ourselves to this unbelievably high standard of trying to make sure the science is as accurate as it can be."

While some science fiction films may take artistic license and bend the facts to amp up the action – windstorms on the surface of Mars, for example – Wilkes says that being bound by the project's

factual backbone doesn't allow for such liberties.

"It's provided a significant handicap in a way to what would ordinarily be a bunch of writers in a room coming up with stuff," he allows.

"But at the same time, I think the drama is even more heightened because it's based on what can really potentially happen to this crew."

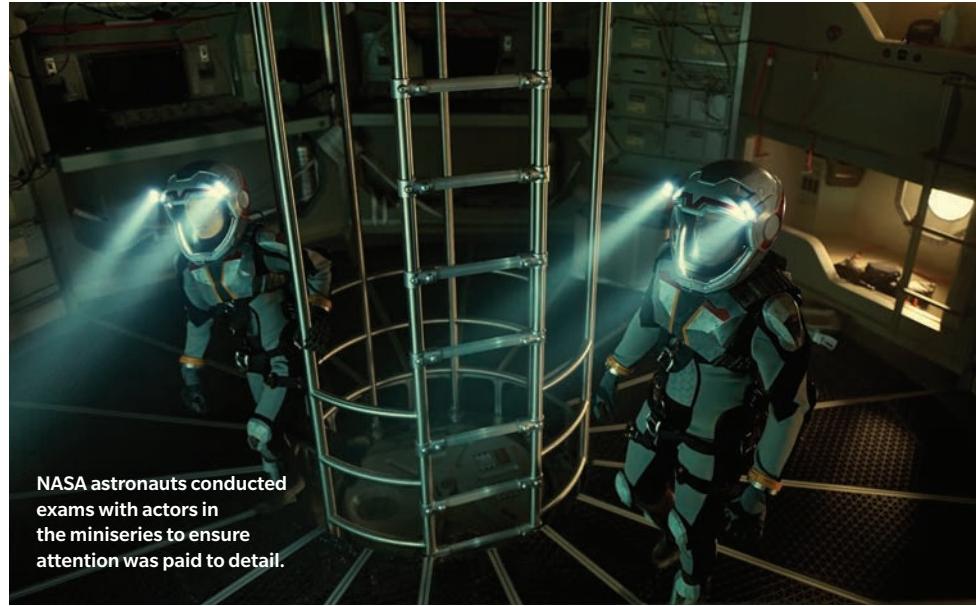
Monroe and Pastore add that the attention to detail had physician and NASA astronaut Mae Jemison, acting as a consultant on the show, conducting exams with the *Mars* actors prior to the beginning of shooting.

Appropriately, a series about the wonder and challenge of exploration is proving to be an exploration of sorts for all the partners involved – for the producers carving out the balance between doc and drama in the project, and for the network investing in the end result.

"What we want the community to take away from this swing on our part is that we are very much open to and interested in really bold, radically new, incredibly ambitious formats," says Monroe.

Pastore echoes the sentiment, adding that for the network, the ultimate goal is to have *Mars* seen as a "genre-busting drama-doc."

And as for the question of colonizing Mars –



NASA astronauts conducted exams with actors in the miniseries to ensure attention was paid to detail.

whether it can happen, or whether it should happen – those involved in the six-part series say their involvement has opened their eyes to how blurry the divide between science fiction and fact is.

"Mars is like the mountain we can see on the horizon capturing our imagination, as it has for

centuries, and now we have the technology to make this push," says Howard.

"I love the notion that we can look beyond the stars and say, 'We should go there,'" offers Wilkes. "That's what we as homo sapiens do – we look beyond and then we go." •

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Like a Boss

BY BARRY WALSH

Wielding a flamethrower while crafting a cake that resembles a fire-breathing dragon... Just another day in the office for Buddy Valastro, better known as TLC's *Cake Boss*.

The combination of a relatable family dynamic and pastry prowess has resulted in eight seasons and increasing popularity for both the program and Valastro's bakery business around the globe. This season will not only feature cake replicas of the Taj Mahal and a giant hot dog, but it will mark a milestone for the series – its 200th episode – with season nine already ordered. Meanwhile, Valastro is expanding his bakery empire, already in 13 locations, beyond the U.S. with plans to open franchises in Brazil and Bahrain before the end of the year. He's also evolving plans for his production company, Cakehouse Media, formed with partner Art Edwards.

Speaking to *realscreen* while grabbing lunch at Carlos' Bakery – the Hoboken, New Jersey shop that has been the birthplace of the *Cake Boss* phenomenon – Valastro offers his take on why the show has lasted close to a decade, and how it's still resonating with audiences internationally as well as domestically.

You've been doing this for eight seasons now, and close to 10 years. What do you think is the secret behind the show's staying power?

It's feel-good TV. There's a good family dynamic that people can relate to – no matter where you come from or what culture, family is the most important thing. How many shows can you really sit down with the whole family and watch?

In the early days was it hard to run a business and have the cameras following you?

100 per cent. That's partly why I built up the Factory [a large space used for making the more elaborate cakes], which is also a studio. Being there, not only are we able to get away from all of that, we're also able to make the craziest cakes. I ain't gonna lie to you – I was just working with a flamethrower. It's not like I'm putting a sparkler in [the dragon's] mouth. We don't fool around anymore.

When you go to a restaurant and order a dessert, what's your favorite?

Being the *Cake Boss* can be a blessing and a curse at the same time. So the restauranteur or the pastry chef will recognize me and instead of me ordering a dessert, they'll bring out the whole menu! (laughs) They'll stand there and they want to see my reaction. So I probably eat more cake than I should. •

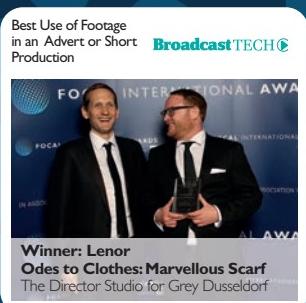


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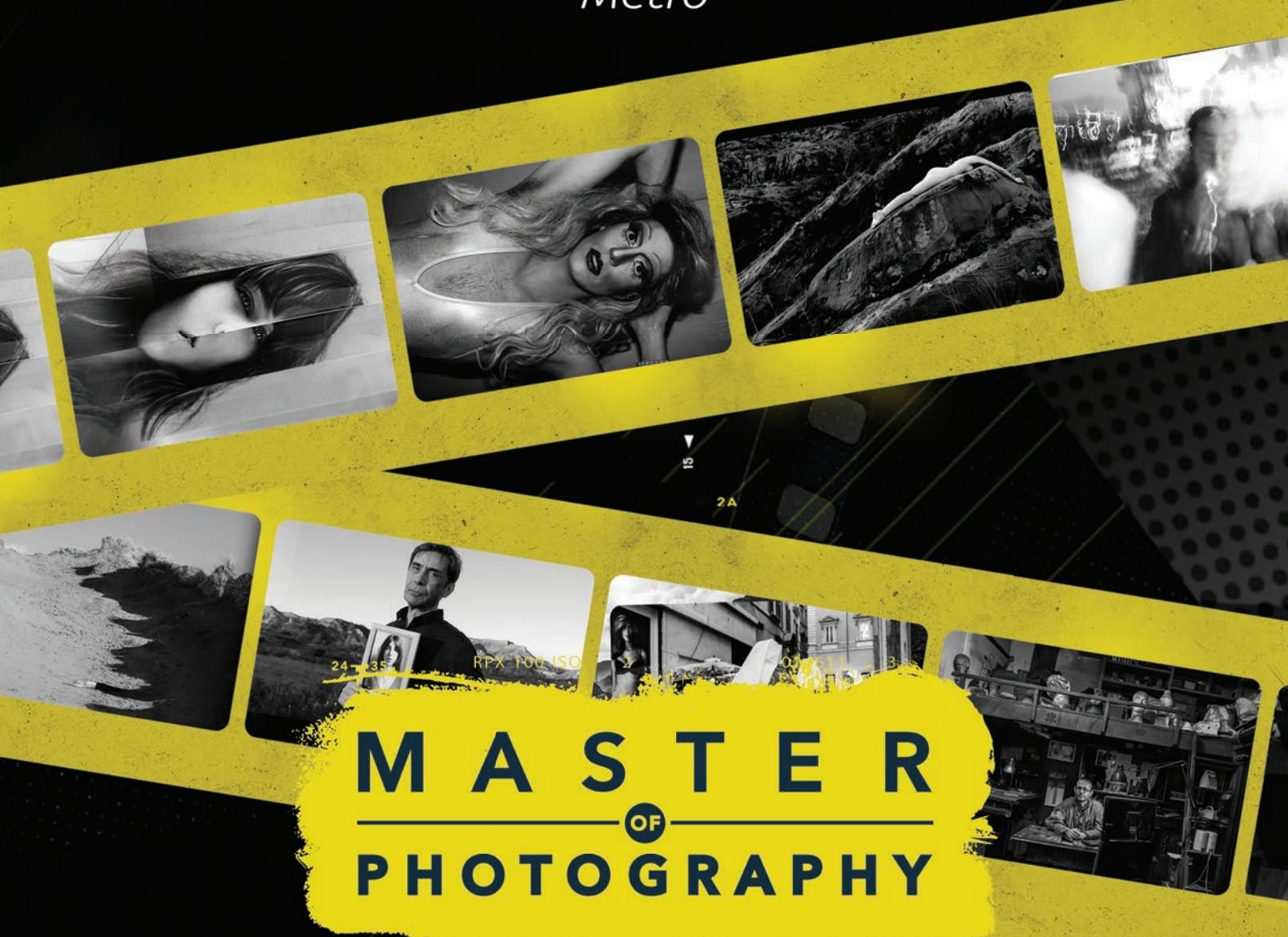
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